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**A Monograph Study of Offshore Fishing and Social Change in
Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford.**

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Terms of reference

Background of Study

This sociological study was financed by The Marine Institute following the presentation of a preliminary paper entitled *'Irish Offshore Share Fishermen - transposing artisan convention into commercial control'* by Peter Collier Ph.D. This paper offered a theoretical framework for probing topics of change regarding offshore fishing convention and control techniques used by vessel owners in the Republic of Ireland.

Purpose of the study

The study aims to present and interpret evidence dealing with human resources and offshore fishing in the Kilmore Quay local authority port, Co. Wexford. This evidence was collected over a two month period, August-September, 2000.

The scope of the study

The study concentrates on the profile of offshore fishermen and conditions of change related to increasing spans of control over the cumulative Kilmore fishing effort. The study is local in its framing plane. A general review of the status of Irish offshore crewmen is taken into consideration at the concluding stage of this report.

The tasks of the study

The study report tasks are summarised in the Table of contents.



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INTRODUCTION

List of definitions

Local fishing network: This is the social space produced by the chain of ties constituting the cumulative fishing effort identified with a homeport and its marine ecology. A modern fishing network embeds into a historic topography, while fishing disciplines transform subsistence production into an economic space. Local ties are variable from strong family ties to weaker commercial ties linked to the downstream market sector. The wives, partners and children of fishermen are included in a local network sustaining fishing disciplines.

Fishing discipline: Disciplines are control or organisation systems. Catching disciplines are technically dynamic but less so regarding their social mobilisation. Wider organisation of catching opportunities and their added value have different adaptive structures. For example, fishermen's representative organisations, fishing companies, co-operatives, bargaining agencies or producer groups linked with a particular species.

Catching unit: A catching unit is the inventory of elements, including social capital, which constitute a single hunting expedition. A catching unit includes not just the boat and its crew but the historical disposition that forms that unit's identity as a named *patrimony*, for example MFV Atlantic Dawn. A catching unit embodies the particular style of its fishing discipline engendered by its master, who is generally, but not always, the skipper. A skipper's style is composed of discipline technique, ecological insight and charisma. A catching unit's style and risk ratios are evaluated constantly by the other units of the local network. This practical information is embodied and circulated in the form of the fishing story.

Fishing story: Under share fishing practices, individual ties move from catching unit to catching unit in efforts to maximise their investment in the fish market. In the other direction, boat crews break their informal agreement with individuals in an effort to maximise the unit's gross returns. These movements and their cues are narrated in the fishing story. *'Who has gone with whom'; 'what boat is easier to work'; 'who is planning a larger catching capacity'; 'who knows more'*: all these signals circulate orally on a daily basis through the fishing network. In the Irish context the fishing story remains localised i.e. identified and interpreted within the frame of a harbour locale (although this is the object of reorientation presently).

There are three social planes across which fishing relations and communications are bounded to give localised coherence in the Irish context:

The harbour locale: The positioning of boats inside a harbour constitutes the tie-up configuration of a local fleet. What is perceived as the binding together of vessels into a local fleet identity seldom reflects social reality. Home harbour locales are primarily refuges adapted for the contingency of bad weather and other external circumstances related to the outlying hinterland.

The at-sea environment: Released from the tensions of the harbour locale, each catching unit adopts its hunting strategy once at sea. The social conditions change from the collective group's 'local fishing story' to the individual catching unit's 'hunting story'. Information flows at sea, including crewmen's mobile phones, are screened constantly by

other units. A sense of secrecy enfolds each catching unit and this is underlined by the maxim: *'what happens on the boat stays on the boat'*.

The on-shore locality: The family localities of Irish fishermen and their dependants are in coastal villages with strong ties to an agricultural environment. *'Every harbour is down a crooked road'* may be a topographical observation but struggles to achieve a local fishing identity in opposition to the dominance of agriculture is problematic. East and south coast fishermen compete to embed a professional category in opposition to agriculture thus confining their vision to local values. This is compounded today by the overlapping of maritime recreation and green tourism markets linked to rural development programmes¹. Identity differences between fishing groups or their 'ascription' by others ('they are the Howth men' or 'that's a Dunmore boat') are linked to owner residency and judgements based on the boat's history that is generally coastal rather than deep-water framed².

Artisan fishing: For the purposes of this study's context artisan fishing is defined as the practice of share fishing that binds participation with an individual catching unit and its production continuity. Artisan fishing practice implies that the boat owner is also the skipper. While this has evolved to bring on board outsiders from the kinship group, artisan fishing still mobilises the majority of medium-sized catching units. This is sanctioned by Irish jurisprudence that provides share fishermen with the optional category of a 'self-employed' partnership with the boat's owner.

Commercial fishing: Spreading catching opportunities and risk management over increased fishing efforts (for example increasing or decreasing crew numbers across a number of vessels) is defined in this study's context as commercial fishing. The practical difference between artisan and commercial fishing is primarily one of risk offset by gross tonnage opportunity calculated over more than two catching units. While the share fishing convention is used to mobilise individual crews, the distribution of profit opportunity and risk-taking is managed from the perspective of a corporate structure and its monitoring of return on capital. In this context men no longer 'fish with' a named skipper-owner but 'fish for' a named entity.

The Common Fishery Policy fishing field: Adopting a theoretical dimension for control in the at-sea environment needs an understanding of the regulatory schema legitimating enforcement under the instruments of the Common Fishery Policy³. The history of fishery

¹ This is reflected by national statistics collection and its categorisation. The 1996 Census classification codes Fishing '205' and its social class as 3 and 4 i.e. 'Non-manual' and 'skilled manual' while there is no occupational code given. See 1996 Central Statistics Office, Dublin, 1998, p.103. See also Duggan, Hughes, Sexton. *Occupational Employment Forecasts 2003*, Fas/ERSI, 1997 where 14 broad occupational groups and '45 more detached occupational categories' were forecasted. There was no commercial fishing category.

² I adapt the Norwegian ethnologist Fredrik Barth's concept of 'ascription' of ethnic group boundaries as there are similar problems resulting from 'locality' and 'ecological' work boundaries regarding fishers' identification of both themselves and others. Barth also worked on Norwegian fishing communities. See *'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'* in *Ethnicity*, Eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, Oxford, 1996, p.76-79.

³ Social field theory provides for a framework to measure the volumes and goods of each catching unit competing for fish inside the CFP zone. There are differences between the biophysical and juridical dimensions because the psychological force of the 'power' field and that of the 'force' field are not similar in affect. The 'power' field of commercial fishing is dominated by political strategies while that of the 'force' field by individual catching unit's competitive discipline and

law within an Irish context and the structures introduced by the 1993 Control Regulation condition offshore catching units and their learning strategies⁴. It is across the CFP control field that local fishing stories are mediated through different spokespersons for port-based fishermen's organisations: the Killybeg's Fishermen's Organisation, Irish Fish Producers Organisation, The Irish Fishermen's Organisation and others. Each of these groups attempts to diffuse the 'true story' for Irish fishing as a national issue in a constant struggle to assure their autonomy linked to a fishing network identity nested into a physical port⁵.

There are two conceptual dimensions to be evaluated for catching units at sea: the at-sea environment that is essentially psychophysical and the at-sea control field that is psycho-judicial. Both perspectives must be evaluated simultaneously for pragmatic decision making by skippers and owners. Tickets of entry to the CFP fishing field are increasing in value thus field relations are increasingly exclusive: Irish whitefish tonnage is valued on the open market at anything between £3,000 to £3,500 per tonne. Who got what in the distribution of licences and tonnage resources is linked to the economic and social resources of individual skippers and owners, that in turn is linked to political and authority management actions to control the native fishing field. Investment ties with the CFP fishing field are therefore strong and structured according to capital opportunity and insight into individual fishing histories and home port notoriety.

A note on methodology

All learning techniques of a fishing discipline are experienced as percept of the hunting expedition. A hunting expedition is both co-operative and competitive by nature. While technological, economical and juridical variables may frame the event more efficiently, the impulse to 'go fishing' remains that of the primitive hunt and its *fortuna*. Hunters' ties are bound by this ambiguous co-operative-competitive mode that makes process rationalisation a difficult task. A Russian aphorism reflects this: '*One fisherman sees another from afar*'⁶. Winning distance from those with whom one co-operates is the universal stimulus-energy for all conventional fishing relations and their values including between fish sellers and buyers⁷.

Fishing network identities are formed more by the accumulation of failed efforts to haul the 'Big Lift' than by the few achieving its riches⁸. Traditional belief of experienced

motivation. The problem has been to negotiate a valid demarcation between both. See Lewin, K. *Field Theory in Social Science*, New York, Harper, 1951, p. 42.

⁴ For a comprehensive overview of the history and present day enforcement jurisprudence of the CFP see Long, J. Ronan and Curran, Peter A., *Enforcing the Common Fisheries Policy*, Oxford, Fishing News Books/Blackwell Sciences, 2000.

⁵ Joey Murrin, until recently the chief executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation and the most charismatic of Irish fishermen's spokespersons, declared in an interview with Fishing News (October, 2000): '*Fishermen have got to stop deceiving themselves regarding fish stock control. There's nobody innocent in this. Nobody is being honest with themselves*'. Legitimising 'the truth' of the national fishing story is intrinsic to the problem of a national re-framing of fishing interests. Only when the sector is fully rationalised into clearly identified sector bodies can 'deception' be recognised by all for what it is.

⁶ I owe Arthur Reynolds thanks for giving me this aphorism and reflection.

⁷ Smith, Charles W. *Auctions: the social construction of value*, New York, Free Press-McMillan, 1989. See Smith's account of the New England Fish Auction that gives an excellent description of ties and distancing between fish sellers (fishermen's groups) and the fish buyers.

⁸ The 'success story' plays a central image of agency recognition in fishing news. At the launch of the 'Avro Warrior', a £5.5 million 40.7m whitefish vessel its owner Mr. Brendan McGrath is quoted in his profile given by the Irish Skipper magazine as saying: '*I started out with absolutely nothing and I still have an awful lot of that. The fishing industry was a bit like that a short time ago*'. In news profiles given of successful catching-entrepreneurs one characteristic is dominant:

fishermen is that their game's natural fortune is circular in rhythm and movement as with fish stocks: *'what's goes round comes round'*. Any observer seeking to objectify what judgements of a 'good' and a 'bad' fisherman implicates for those who identify with this hunter's logic must adopt an innovative frame of thinking. From *'roaming the high seas in search of fish'* to compliance with European quota norms, the middle-aged Irish fisher has seen his identity shift from a free adventurer to attempts to restrain his hunting energy.

All players in the fishing game relate to the impulse to gain margins of freedom both preparing for and during the hunt's pillage⁹. This is the incommensurable paradox of the fishing game and what is called *'the fishing disease'* or *'having it in the blood'* that mobilises efforts to win control over the hunt's ecology by making it to the wheelhouse. There can be only one man in the wheelhouse. When the term 'co-operative' action is used in the context of fishing practices it must be mediated through the individual's commitment to the fishing hunt and its prizes, not all of which can be evaluated in money terms. Symbolic power reflected in boat prestige play their part in this game and, in the Irish context, leadership is related to his fishing prestige won at sea and not in efforts to bind men into co-operative actions on shore.

'Every fishermen tells lies, therefore all fishermen tell the truth' is the common sense formula embodied in the language of Irish fishermen who cannot escape their land disposition. Anyone who has come from the outside into the Irish fisher's world will recognise the phrase as having psychological relevance. The commercial fisherman's world is *latently* schizophrenic as it is divided into two sets of relationally opposing behaviours, at sea and on-shore¹⁰. He must try to escape each group of relations during moments of regression when for example fatigue, illness or regular failure occurs. Both worlds are *'a law unto themselves'* and to speak about them often force fishermen into silence regarding their ability to *'tell the right story'*. Every man's 'right story' is calculated across this identification linked to the great fishing hunt where each hunter believes that the 'next trip' might secure his social position *on shore* among the landed class.

Generally, expedition patterns are a let down and valued only within the psychic image of the 'next trip'. The impulsive drive of young fishermen can never be sublimated until they have learned to evaluate the fishing game *'as a way of life'* and not as *'a means to an end'*. This is the common sense dictum of committed skippers and crewmen: *'you are only as*

they are all presented as self-made individuals who have won their place from the *fortuna* 'given' as a gift from the sea. The Irish Skipper, May, 2000, p.25.

⁹ An advertisement in a recent edition of a popular fishermen's magazine carries the provocative title over a new 30 metre longliner vessel: **'This is a dedicated money machine!'**. It takes little imagination to read between the lines as to what that means for fish hunters.

¹⁰ The clinical term 'schizophrenic' as used by the anthropologist Gregory Bateson in his work dealing with competition and communication symmetries between individuals and groups, is adopted here. Problems related to obtaining valid information about differences of the habits of offshore fishermen made approaches to opinion collection difficult. The strategy was to involve all owners in the distribution of 130 questionnaires to their crews believing that there was some collective legitimisation there to motivate. This proved not to be the case. All Kilmore boat owners without exception said 'yes, no problem' but very few delivered. In one case having agreed to distribute questionnaires one boat owner discreetly stopped delivery claiming *'the men would not understand unless I explain it to them'*. When members of his crew were questioned later, there was little doubt as to why 'the owners' did not want 'them' questioned about 'their' working lives: *'The owners are afraid we might say something they don't want to hear'*. Who are 'the owners' and what is 'not to be heard by them' constitute the logical flaws in viewpoints that need investigation to objectify both participatory and opposition interests.

good as your last trip'. Those who have survived the rigours of offshore fishing express themselves in language controlling the double world they all live in. Older men are ascetic in their approach to on-shore problems as they have experienced the '*fishing buzz*' when confronted by storms of force 8 or 9. Very few on land have even the vaguest idea of what that ecological experience means. During this study interviews were recorded with Irish men who have known '*great depression*', those who finished their lives in '*sad circumstances*' or worse, those who lost their boats and in one case a son because of '*jealousy*' and those who can never '*understood what fishing is all about but are still out there trying*'.

The constantly self-evaluating fisherman is always one step ahead of himself, his boat and his family because of one unknowable factor: the fish. To speak in collective identity terms is to constantly deny that every trip is mobilised by the egoistic hunger to get '*beyond himself*', i.e. to beat the others. Uncertainty and anxiety about the next expedition are intrinsic to the professional fisher's way of life. His deceptive on-shore language often denies hard evidence to the contrary. He recreates '*walls of ambiguity*' that force many a technocrat to abdicate in the face of '*lies, and more lies about lies*'. However, what he says and more often what he does not say concerning his work must be understood within a world few technocrats or even fish buyers dare experience. Fishermen know this and have little confidence in '*bureaucrats who speak about the sea without as much as knowing its roar*'. Irish fishermen work inside a tough, solitary, often irrational and highly contingent ecology that has few similarities with the bureaucratic formalism of neat fields and FEOGA agricultural subventions.

It was by accepting the contradictory dualism embodied in fishermen's language describing a competitive working life constantly reminded of being '*not legal*' by on-shore technocracy that gave this study its tacit approach. Social network theory does underpin this diagnostic, however an effort has been made to give voice to the different actors not least of whom are the wives and partners of the men. Interview extracts are given sociological framing while the use of parenthesis and italics indicate direct phrases chosen to illustrate meaning. The definitions given and the sociology of Irish commercial offshore fishing as probed in Kilmore Quay resulted from the opinions recorded and the facts observed during three years living in the proximity of its fishing boats and its people. Without their co-operation and goodwill there could have been no study possible other than the usual recourse to statistical data, most of which is without relevance in the practical world of their daily fishing hunt. I take this moment to thank them all for helping as well as Dr. John Joyce of the Marine Institute for having made this study possible.

The bulk of the fieldwork locally publicised under the title '*A monography Study of Offshore Fishing and Social Change in Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford*' was carried out over a two-month period: August-September 2000.



SECTION I

Evolution of a local fishing network

"Fishing is the only thing we have here, other than the farmers".
Thomas Power, first generation Kilmore skipper-owner.

1.1. Introduction

This section traces the modernisation of fishing structures as 'a way of life' that emerged after World War II around a number of catching entrepreneurs from Kilmore Quay. Family ties with boat ownership, the share convention of distributing profits and recruiting crews that formed Kilmore Quay's habitat into a distinctive fishing identity.

1.2. 'Only poor men fish'

Fishing off the Kilmore coastline and Crossfarnogue Point during the 19th century was restricted to summer lobster catching and herring fishing with a few hookers capable of fishing the abundant waters of the Nymph Bank south of the Saltee Islands. The first constructed harbour was partially completed in 1847 (as were most small Irish harbours¹¹) by a Government loan and the patronage of Mr. Morgan of Johnstown Castle. This was to be repaid by the people of the barony after a long effort led by a local priest, Fr. James Walsh to obtain a refuge harbour for bigger boats to fish the Nymph Bank. This new pier was developed as a cargo port to import Welsh coal and export potatoes by local merchants. These merchants subsequently reconstructed the pier with the assistance of the Wexford notables after a violent storm in 1896. A list of boat owners who lost boats during that storm indicates boats were fished by land owning families such as the Boxwells, O'Flahertys, Maddens, Parles, Grants and Walshes. Fishing change as technique came at the end of the century with the arrival of boats from North Wexford and Arklow that used drift nets of five fathoms instead of the locals' two-fathom nets. During the Great War English, Scots, Manx, Cornish and French boats all fished off the rich Wexford District coast that offered either a northern or southern coast line as shelter during bad weather¹². After the war there was a slump in the demand for Irish fish due to the large fleet of British steam-trawlers released from war duty.

There was little motorised trawl fishing in Kilmore Quay before 1940 with only six small trawlers employing 18 men¹³. Owners were linked with Wexford schooners and deep-sea crewing from Liverpool. Inshore fishermen rented small parcels of land mixing in agriculture with summer fishing. Pollack, mackerel and lobster fishing values increased and the family boats engendered local competition with the counting of landed boxes by

¹¹ Colfer, Billy, 'Slade: the development of a fishing village 1450-1850' in *An Irish Atlas*, Cork University Press, 1997, p. 271. Small southern Wexford harbours like Kilmore Quay, Slade, Carne and Arthurstown were part of the public works of the famine period to 'encourage then the fisheries of Ireland'.

¹² Kinsella, Anna. *The Windswept Shore - a history of the Courtown District*. Wexford, Private, 1984, pp.79-80.

¹³ Historiographical details have been compiled from a number of written and oral sources. Articles from the *Kilmore Parish Journal* by John Power, Joe Monaghan, Dick Bates, Richard Roche and Seamus O' Keffe. Particular thanks to John Power who gave a number of interviews for this study while older fishermen from Kilmore, Duncannon and Wexford also gave information about changes in fishing since the Second World War.

wives. The Second World War brought the more energetic into the Merchant Navy and monies earned returned fishing as a real opportunity after 1945. Daily inshore catching became the discipline of a number of Kilmore Quay families during the 1950s with 14 small trawlers, 10 of them under 15 tons, with 48 men working their decks. Stencilled named boxes were still counted publicly on each landing thus enforcing competition between families. However, in local primary schools no mention was made to either the sea or its work possibilities. Rural public opinion considered that *'only poor men fish'* although agricultural work provided the mechanical skills needed to fish motorised boats successfully.

Modernised commercial fishing in the Republic of Ireland dates then from the early 1950s. There was no robust technocratic policy to develop commercial fishing before the arrival of Brendan O'Kelly at the wheel of Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) in 1962. Motorised boat owners were exceptional entrepreneurs whose risk taking induced their younger kin to go fishing beyond the local horizon. Their stake was to fish the *'silver gold'* of herring alongside the hundred foreign boats fishing in the Celtic Sea and Dunmore Fishery from the end of 1950s and during the 1960s. These fishing pioneers engendered the family dynasties that dominate today's pelagic sector out of Killybegs, Galway, Dingle, Castletownbere, and, to a lesser extent, Kilmore Quay. The pioneers developed their discipline by imitation of techniques witnessed on foreign boats then diffused practices inside their harbour locales with very little innovative orientation from the Irish State.

Synoptic: Commercial fishing, as 'a way of life', faced the dominance of both agriculture and merchant interests in the Kilmore area. Contingent events and their timing such as violent storms or market gluts shaped the efforts of fishing pioneers to win their place as independent producers¹⁴. Those who had to break moulds regarding local prejudices were strong willed and highly motivated persons. The driving force was the symbolic and economic prize of *'owning the boat'* and *'everything that you made went back into the boat'*. The boat was the patrimony that could be handed on to sons thus securing the family name a place in an agrarian society that denigrated fishing as being less valued than farming. *'The only thing I noticed over those first decades of my life in these parts was that you were looked on as the poor relation of everyone. A fisherman'*.

1.3 The modern pioneers

Willie Bates (1910-1994) helped to legitimise commercial fishing disciplines as a *'real family thing'* in the village through committed time at sea and personal charisma¹⁵. *'It's the man that catches the fish not the boat'*. Alongside his brothers Marks, Jimmy and Lack (another brother Christy stayed on the family farm in Ballyburn), he constituted the Bates' family as *'the boat owning hierarchy due to his hard work combined with looking forward'*. Bates had worked on schooners from Tyrell's of Arklow and was a skipper of a salvage vessel during the 1930s. In 1937, the R.N.L.I. replaced its boat stationed in Kilmore Quay with the first motor lifeboat the *'Ann Isabella Pyemont'*. Willie Bates, following a training period and exam in Dublin, was given the job of mechanic. *'He was a pioneer because he changed things in many ways even between families, because fishing was so competitive between them'*.

This was a prestige position for a local person, officially recognising Bates' marine experience and capabilities to *'understand the mechanics of the new sea world'*. After the

¹⁴ Stochastic events such as violent storms or changes in fish stock patterns are intrinsic factors that shape fishing mentalities and percepts of their specific bio-physical environments. These cannot be rationalised using probability models but are learned as practice over a fisher's lifetime.

¹⁵ Reference to the Bates' kinship with fishing in Kilmore Quay is made by John de Courcy Ireland's *'Ireland's Sea Fisheries- A history'*, Dublin, The Glendale Press, 1981

war he bought the 12 metres 'Mystical Rose' which became the '*unofficial training ship*' for his five sons and other young men of the Quay. Other boat-owning families such as the Scallans, the Hayes and the Powers assembled the genealogical nest from which the modern fishing network with a sense of relative autonomy evolved. Family relations such as brother and cousin, uncle and nephew formed the hierarchy of the early 12-15 metres wooden trawlers fishing the herring off Hook Head. It was the lucrative herring fishing that brought these family boats and about 60 men through the sixties. Some Kilmore men went to the BIM training school in Cobh and second hand trawlers were purchased from Scotland. The most successful owners progressed to purchase new boats built in Ireland encouraged under the BIM low interest scheme.

Young men who went forward into the wheelhouse were '*nominated*' by a combination of family ties to boat-ownership, time spent at sea and an individual will to take risks¹⁶. '*They were the ones with the hunger to stay at sea*'. A feeling of '*restlessness*' during school days spent '*on the back bench*' and home expediency sharpened fishing as a way to leave school early and not emigrate. Selection of who would go fishing and who would stay close to the land were sanctioned by a schoolroom denigration of fishing. '*The teachers would say sure if all else fails you can go fishing*'. Boys who '*hated school*' were '*given a hand up*' onto an uncle's or cousin's boat to earn their way, generally after a six month trial period at sea, to a share of the catch.

The share convention was a natural ordering of a fishing expedition that bound fishers directly to the on-shore fish market. The fish caught by the hunting group were shared equally among the group with an extra share going to the boat owner¹⁷. Fishing was therefore perceived as a natural '*family effort*' regulated '*by different fishing seasons that you could set your clock and calendar by*'. Like farming, fishing had its own natural time at sea and thus inculcated practices regarding its seasonal ecology. Apart from this temporal regularity, it was mobilised by necessity to sustain boat repayments and provide a household living. It could be precarious and some men remember fathers asking for '*a whip around*' family members to meet repayment schedules during lean times.

There was little choice for the Kilmore sons of the first generation of motorised fishing who followed Willie Bates' example by staying at sea overnight. Bates' decision to stay at sea over Tuesday nights at the end of 1950s was regarded as '*a scandal*' and underlined fishing's perception by on-shore conservatism. Bates' son Declan would experience the same reaction when he decided to fish his beam trawler on the Sabbath at the end of the 1970s. Each generation of catching entrepreneurs pushed further and further outwards, increasing time and capacity at sea, thus their unit's cumulative fishing effort. Every increase in an individual's catching effort had its affect on the local fishing network, either in efforts to block off tensions provoked by jealousy or to modify relations in line with the new fishing competition. Those who stood alone against conservative opinion were '*subversives*' and often disliked by the more socialised others until they had proved their autonomy by '*progressing*' to a bigger boat.

Fishing sustained repayments on the family boats provided the founding fathers matched crew selection ('*the closer the blood the more difficult they have in getting on together*')

¹⁶ Matrimonial ties were important between the first and second-generation boat owners. The symbolic confirmation of these ties was the naming of new boats after daughters. Ten of the 32 boats of 1977 carried daughter names that symbolically affirmed matrimonial alliances inside the Kilmore network. New boats at the end of the nineties no longer carry family names; for example 'The Quay Fisher' that arrived in 1999 and belongs to the O'Flaherty brothers' fishing partnership. Changes in the names of fishing vessels reflect transformation of fishing from family to corporate identities.

¹⁷ In the French Ivory Coast fish are landed daily on the beach into huge piles for each boat while the fishermen sit around the pile insuring the individual sale of their share of the pile.

with wider control over the fishing ecology. Dominant organisation was achieved with confidence in Kilmore Quay due to its closed genealogical community and littoral geographical situation¹⁸. The presence of Ireland's first Coastguard Station in the mid-1820s marked a maritime distinction for the small village from the dominant agricultural community of upper Kilmore. The presence of a R.N.L.I. lifeboat from 1847 onwards enforced this maritime distinction¹⁹. Combined with this distinction was the competition to win individual rather than participate in boat ownership as fishing alliances evolved from 1940 onwards. This individual drive toward boat ownership is conveyed by this phrase: *'to survive you had to get out on your own'*. Eleven out of the twenty boat owning households configured in the Quay lived in the 30 or so small thatched cottages of the main street in 1960, hardly any of these 'vernacular' cottages are owned by active fishermen today.

The selection of crewmen without direct ties to the core families was related to the first outsider 'given a hand on board'. If there was need of another 'hand' then it was this man who brought on board another acquaintance coming from his locality. As boat ownership accumulated so too did the crews' cluster distribution around the farming boundaries of the village. Social division between crews and the status village group was clearly understood: *'When the crew came onshore they just go off and live their lives (sic.). You don't socialise with them, you don't do anything like that with them. That's the way it works'*. Deckhands were taken on from outside the village space from agricultural town lands like Nemestown that adjoins the Quay but is regarded as *'being different'*. The social division of labour was censored because of proximity, as it was regarding larger farmers and their labourers. However, one retired owner-skipper from a core family put this division into context:

"As I see it... I hate to say this...but you have two different.... I wouldn't call them sections but you have the owners and the skippers who think they would be a little bit above the crew. They tend to stay together if they are socialising...Perhaps sections might be the right word. They have more in common cause as they would be talking about fishing grounds, gear and prices which wouldn't concern the deckies. He'd probably be thinking about football or girlfriends. A good deckie will last a long time but it depends on the boat and the money they are making".

Synoptic: The savings made in the herring fishery in the Celtic Sea during the 1960s underwrote expansion of the Kilmore family catching units into bigger second-hand vessels bought in from Scotland (such as the Bates, Scallan and the Power brothers who owned 13 boats between them in early 1970s). Local owner-skippers began to sell and buy boats generally located outside the local network mainly to avoid conflict over boat defects and familiarity. Whitefish were still abundant until the mid-1970s so new fishing techniques such as double-nets were rewarding. The launching of Willie Bates' 65 ft. Arklow built 65 ft. 240 HP 'Thomas McDonough' at the Quay in 1969 was an event marking the first stage of Kilmore's fishing network modernisation. Regularity allowed fishermen to transfer new techniques and manage their catching unit toward increasing the fishing effort. Insight regarding new fishery grounds was shared selectively and co-operative action sought by the organised men to service their fishing effort

¹⁸ A tenants' petition to break from the agricultural north of the parish had been granted in 1875 and Kilmore Quay became a curacy when St. Peter's church was built a few years later. Close family dependencies engendered by a mixed subsistence of summer fishing and con-acre (linked to the polder lands off Ballyteigue) shaped Kilmore Quay into the dimension of a village space. Of the thirty two named families on the original petition more than 80% are still present in the Kilmore Quay curacy.

¹⁹ Power, John. *Above and Beyond the Call of Duty - a local history of the Kilmore Lifeboat*, Wexford, Private, 1993, p. 15.

1.4. The Kilmore Quay Fishermen's Co-operative

One of the first fishermen's co-operatives in the Republic was founded in Kilmore Quay in order to purchase a lorry to transport fish to the Dublin market in 1956. In 1966, the initial group adopted the rules of an I.A.O.S. co-operative and established a membership base of 130 boat owners and their deckhands. The £1 per share membership area was first restricted to a radius of miles around the village, then extended the following to neighbouring ports from Hook Head to Rosslare. An estimated 40% of the base membership came from outside Kilmore Quay and crewmen received bonus shares in part payment. Ties of lateral association extended from the Quay's core group to fishing efforts out of neighbouring harbours. The criterion for membership was of 'active fishing' but already there was dichotomisation between dominant interests and 'outsiders' that would increase the Co-op's mission's ambivalence in time. Local knowledge sharing and loyalty declarations by delivering fish to the Co-op would highlight boundaries between the competing catching units both inside Kilmore's harbour locale and with other small neighbouring ports, such as Carne and Duncannon.

The mobilising force behind the co-operative's foundation was to insure individual sales by fishermen against Dublin market gluts that were common at that time in opposition to today's market shortages. The Co-op opened its new premises in 1968 with its services of a marine-services shop, lobster tanks, net repairing, ice-making machine, forklift, oil tanker and canteen. Despite having a number of articles giving the Co-op a mission to develop on all fronts including a savings group for fishermen, the Co-operative remained a servicing agency for dominant owners. The co-operative was thus perceived by the inheriting generation as '*a place where the service was free*' according to one of its long-term employees, affirming the illusion of a self-regulating local market.

In 1969, Carbery Sea Products, with investment ties to the Cork-based banking family, established a crab-processing unit in Kilmore Quay. This tempted co-op members to consider getting involved in fish-processing themselves early in the 1970s. While BIM opposed this plan, the Industrial Development Authority did grant-aid the £31,000 the Co-operative invested in a processing plant behind their main premises and opened in 1972. The Co-op's present Chairman, Joe Maddock, (who is also Chairman of the Irish Fishermen's Organisation), put this event into historic perspective:

"By going into the processing side of the fish business the Co-operative opened the door to an ambivalent situation. While what had begun as a co-operative effort to consolidate risks when dealing with the Dublin market, more and more owners could see the reality of the processing industry and direct markets on the Continent. The directors and the members said 'sure we can do that as well and have the benefits for our member'. So in the factory we started to process crabs and mussels, to rake in the profits and so provide this famous 'bettered service'. But instead of setting up a separate corporate entity to be self-sufficient we stayed as we were. Then, we found we had to pay our fishermen top prices and hope to process making a profit. This only benefited the summer inshore men and not the whitefish men..."

The problem with co-operatives is that they see everything locally. Private entrepreneurs see things from a world perspective. I think looking back on it that we could have supplied a separate market but it required a leap of faith from the members. The main change came after that failure and it was the to auction the fish in 1981."

1.5. Fish processing embeds

The arrival of fish-processing entrepreneurs embedded a new layer of control into the local fishing network that evolved during the early 1980s with three plants. Carbery Sea

Products was bought by Red Sail to switch to prawn processing in 1976, while in 1979 Patrick le Guy established Sofrimar to export directly to Rungis in Paris (see section 3 for details). The embedding of a fish business agency provoked transitional speculation by fishermen thus, *temporarily*, blurring boundaries between the physical and market environments of the sea and the land. The processors diffused into the fishing locale the market logic of quality thus higher standards across fishing disciplines. In 1982, the Co-operative finally leased its processing plant to Kilmore Fish Company directed by Paul and Mary Younger with three local skipper-owners involved. The Co-op had begun its weekly fish auction in 1981 and has survived a number of serious financial crises and is still held three times per week fish permitting. By the mid-1980s pressures to lower the 7.5% commission charges forced a number members to quit landing to the co-operative. Intervention species such as megrim were being dyed while there was a lucrative market for them in Spain. No one was *'getting out there for the Co-op and selling the fish into Europe'*. One of the skipper-owners gave his opinion on why he stopped landing to the Co-op:

"I wanted them to drop the full commission charge for a trial year, from 7.5% down to 5%. In this way they would attract more fish and be able to get into bigger volumes. They would not do that and ...Look the whole thing was riddled with personality clashes and it wasn't run as a business should be. I left and a few years later most of the men had left as well".

The Co-operative's self-regulating market identity was now divided by a 'them' and 'us' situation as the more ambitious skipper-owners sought better prices for their catch outside the Co-op's market. Given the mechanism of the share-fishing convention individual crew shares must be considered as being squared-up at the best market prices possible²⁰. Initially, the Co-operative had provided a structure to secure individual interests and mobilise opportunities for the second generation coming through the local selection process. This 'co-operative experience' has left its traces of *'bad blood'* between the core families that *'grew out of discontentment'*, *'local jealousies'* and *'standing back not helping others'* as one committed member put it. The 'ambivalence' of its mission referred to by its Chairman remains rooted in the social processes at work around fishing entrepreneurs and their primary strategy to assure the autonomy of their catching unit as declining fish stocks altered the relative forces inside the external catching field.

The goals of the founding directors *were* achieved in that they secured a core local ownership of boats thus investment patrimonies to transfer or capitalise depending on fish stocks' contingency. New fishing careers for sons were engendered through the social capital produced by the Co-operative effort. For example Eugene Kehoe who owns the local marine services outlet is the son of the Co-op's first lorry driver to the Dublin market John Kehoe. Eugene has an interest in his brother's John's successful scallop boat crewed by himself and his two sons. Another son of a manager of the Co-op is today fishing as a crewman.

The social force to mobilise collective action for the core Kilmore boat owners was, from the outset, linked to transitional fish market structures and resources' contingency. Arbitrary alliances were now to be mobilised by the dynamics of the European fishing

²⁰ This is an essential element of understanding the immediacy of a skipper-owner's drive to assure his crew the best square-up deal around. If he cannot assure this regularly then crewmen will quit and go to another catching unit. It is not a valid argument to pronounce the need for 'long term' vision regarding cumulative fishing efforts as a collective force for group co-operation. The underlying forces that push and pull men across fishing boats operate on the basis of short-term gain linked to the wider contingencies of the downstream fish markets. Thus experienced crewmen's evaluation of 'good' and 'bad' boats, as money-making opportunities, constitute an essential variable of the local crew market.

control field from 1989 onwards. As rationalised market control imposed quota restrictions on traditional species such as sole, catching entrepreneurs were forced to adopt catching strategies dependent on the dominant buyer agencies. The Kilmore Fishermen's Co-operative never represented collective interests as a body to counterbalance these dominant market forces and is typical of many IAOS societies that sought to avoid politicisation²¹. In the Irish context, political patronage and its client ties are regarded in such harbour locales as Kilmore Quay as being the '*business of the individual*' and never the logic of the group²². This is changing as a new fishing élite emerges to do battle for national control of the 'Irish marine industries' as control measures are directed toward a homogeneous form. This orchestrated shifting of mentalities into a national fishing market to compete internationally is physically and symbolically unified around Killybegs, Co. Donegal.

The early selection process of dominant players produced not just privileged co-operation but generational confrontation with the status quo. A brasher, more subversive style of individual fishing entrepreneur emerged during the early 1970s. These young men were more exciting in pushing boundaries outward into uncharted ocean and made no secret of their energy to break away from the '*possie*' and to beat the '*old men at their game*'. One of them, JK, who was not related to a core fishing family, earned his recognition by the fishing fraternity as the inheritor of Willie Bates' '*prestige*' because '*of all the clan...you knew he had the trait, he had the energy and this...strange go*'.

Synoptic: New leadership selections resulting from entourage ties reproduced the energy to increase investment into bigger boats and competitive risk-taking in the widening ecological horizon at sea. '*The money is out there not in here*' was the dictum. The Co-operative provided an organisational structure for the first generation of motorised trawling and diffused a style of competitive action for the Kilmore fishing effort. An essential element of sustaining a fishing effort as difference between other local identities is the objectified 'fairness' between skipper-owners and their crews²³. Unwritten rules of fair play structured crewing practice and learning as the fishing game reproduced its prestige into a local rather than national 'fishing story'.

1.6. Second generation catching entrepreneurs

The second generation of the Quay's catching entrepreneurs invested in more rationalised control described by one as more of '*a calculated effort*'. They committed to undertake higher risks encouraged by local BIM fishery officers and entrenched the production flows of today's Irish offshore catching sector. Changes of fishing practice, such as pair-fishing and purse seining (known as 'beaming'), were orchestrated between institutional constraints and the individual's energy to manage contingency on a larger fishing vessel.

²¹ See my work '*The Disenchanted Land - Identity and Control in Modern Rural Ireland*' that traces the history of the Co-operative Cattle Marts and the National Farmers' Association unpublished doctorate thesis, University of Nantes, France, March 2000.

²² I owe this reflection to John Power, long time Secretary of the K. Q. F. Co-op who was elected Chairman of the Irish Federation of Fishermen's Co-operatives established in 1971 to represent fishing interests during EEC entry negotiations. '*The Federation started off dealing with matters related to Co-op business but gradually it was turned into a policy making organisation and the co-operation just faded out of the picture*'.

²³ There is a consensus opinion regarding why one southern harbour's fishing effort has not been sustained recently. '*The owners started to push their men too far, they just couldn't catch enough for them. Men were being pulled out of pubs on Saturday night to go to sea. The men just told them where to go with their boats in the end*'.

One interviewee started life working *'for the farmers but at £2.50 a week I realised fairly quickly that I'd never own a farm. So I got into fishing'*²⁴. Having got into the wheel house quickly for other owners, his career path shows an early conflict between the private purchase of a 27 metres beam trawler to be made in Holland in 1977 and the credit schedule imposed at that time by BIM. The contractual specifications were conservative and obliged him to purchase a smaller vessel of 24 metres to be built only in Ireland. He accepted BIM's financial contract in 1978 *'unaware that at the time there were banks available to put the money up'* (interest rates moved from the initial 8.5% per annum to a crippling 21% by 1980).

It took this fisherman, now 51 years old, *'seventeen years to climb out of the mess'* he had got into. He considers that out of the 16 young Irish skippers who committed their energies to similar national contracts *'only two or three of us have come through'*. To *'come through'*, he put in one fishing year of 263 days at sea *'keeping the head down'* and refusing temptation to go to Killybegs to fish a tank boat. He tells of *'laughing at the Killybegs boys'* and saying he wanted *'something handier to stay close to home'*. He has considered Kilmore Quay as *'his home and his base'* and has never wanted to move out - even though he had to pay a high price to stay. This is significant as, for catching entrepreneurs like him, an on-shore home community has a social value that opposes efforts to nationalise the Irish fishing effort as a national orientated policy. Ireland's most credited catching entrepreneur, Achill born Kevin McHugh may have brought the MFV *'Atlantic Dawn'* home to Killybegs but the bulk of his fishing career was out of Howth²⁵.

This interviewee's skippering style and successive ownership of three increasingly larger beam trawlers is valued as being a *'successful Irish skipper-owner of the second generation'*. The discipline as experienced by individual skipper-owners like him demands a sustained level of positive will for expedition planning. *'To know where to fish just trust whatever is coming into you'* is how he describes the ecological intuition needed to reproduce success. Although he does have an investment in onshore activities, he considers that his *'job is to catch more fish'* and thus his *'job ends'* when he comes ashore. The terms fishing or marine industry do not *'really have meaning'* for him as he is *'in the catching sector'*. Motivated by *'the fishing buzz'*, he is a skipper-owner who likes nothing *'better than to be on my own when hunting'*. He does not listen to *'world news'* when at sea and he does *'not talk as there is so much happening right around us and it needs full concentration'*. He is *'always making a plan'* that he must then stick to without flinch. He considers *'knowing what you want'* as being essential to the plan as *'how in the name of God can He give me what I want when I don't know myself'*.

He is a believer in what is called *'the old attitude'*, not just in divine providence but in his own ability to continue to catch *'more fish'*²⁶ and is *'very conscious of the situation of the*

²⁴ In a local survey of the parish of Kilmore carried out in 1972 as a section of the County Efficiency Competition a total of 140 persons submitted completed questionnaires 49% of who were 21-40 years category. The average annual income showed 43% earned less than £500 per annum with 23% earning from £501-£1000. Given that a good fishing share has been evaluated at between £70-£100 during the 1970s, fishing was anything but 'poor' as far as the younger men were concerned. The relatively high level of cash in the hand fishing income is significant to understand why middle-aged crewmen today have difficulty understanding why their incomes have remained static while the rest of the local economy has improved dramatically. Only 23% of the respondents had finished secondary education while 17% had had some technical instruction. From Seamus O'Keeffe, *Kilmore Quay and its potential*, Kilmore Parish Journal, 1973, p.7.

²⁵ Marine Times, Special Edition, September, Volume 13, No. 4. Finding a national symbolic 'home' for Irish fishing is the object of struggles between a plethora of coastal fishermen's associations.

²⁶ *'There are two types of fishers in a fishing community: God fearing and those others who have no set rules at all. The first is very religious, comes onshore and prays while the latter comes*

man working on the deck' as well as the fact that he 'must come back and put up a decent week's wages for the lads'. He believes that 'they are first on the list and once they are looked after then I am definitely OK'. He considers that his 'lads' should seek their own health insurance as they earn more than the 'average self-employed onshore worker'. He has told his crew a 'thousand times' to look after themselves 'but in all truth they just won't bother their arses' doing it. Even though in total they only spend 'twenty weeks at sea' he does not know why 'they should be looked after' by him in respect to their insurance and tax situations. This fisherman, like the generation before him, is seen now as a conservative.

Another interviewee – a second-generation entrepreneur from the early seventies - is now 52 years of age and sometimes considered as a 'headstrong' but successful man 'of the old attitude'. He is the son of one of the Kilmore fishing pioneers and in 1976 purchased an Irish registered second-hand Dutch beam trawler, introducing the controversial purse seining technique onto the south coast and Ireland. He berthed the boat in Dunmore East and his fish was boycotted for a year where local fishers condemned beaming as a danger to fish stocks. He now manages his beam trawler skippered by two of his brothers. In his own words:

"It's always been the same as far as change in fishing has been concerned. Someone makes a move to improve things like I did and everyone wants to get rid of him. They even had 'Ban the Beamer' tee shirts going around at the time! But after a while when I had explained what I was doing and stood my ground they changed their minds. I told them that if they wanted to discuss it with me it would not be in the pubs but in the galley. Look, Kilmore is a beamer port today, the biggest in Ireland. It's still a question of attitude towards fishermen and new ideas. As far as the authorities are concerned we are always second class citizens".

Our third interviewee is also a son of another of Kilmore's fishing pioneers. Now 52 years old, he once owned seven vessels during the 1980's and is considered to be Kilmore's most successful catching entrepreneur - a man 'who has invested wisely into property what he earned'. Here is how he bought his first beam trawler:

"My first boat was a timber boat and when I had paid her off within two years, I thought that there was no future in these kinds of boats. So I thought that I would have to change to make a living. So I went to Holland to buy a boat. I think I was the first from around here to go to Holland. I made several trips to Holland and Belgium. I went in lorries and I thumbed lifts. I knew where the beamers were and that that was the best type of boat to look for at that time wasn't it? After going over and back to Holland for about six months I finally found the boat I wanted, the price was right and the size. I got the loan from the bank and had enough left to rig her out. When I got fishing with her I surpassed all my expectations for her at the time. That was in 1978 and for seven or eight years I was set up".

Synoptic: A wider perception of commercial fishing's ecology became part of the second-generation entrepreneurs' style during the 1970s. Successful catching entrepreneurs broke away from the land marked tow-lines of their fathers and ventured into unchartered waters²⁷. Some steamed across the infamous 9-degree west parallel that

ashore and gets drunk'. Cit. in R. Nowell & I. Mills, *The Skipper - a fisherman's tale*, London, BBC Books, 1993, p.17.

²⁷ A good example of the shared chartering of these new fishery territories during the 1970s was the transcription by hand of undersea wreck positions on the wheelhouse walls and chart table. Wreck positions were therefore transmitted to new skippers coming into the wheelhouse or to new

divides historic territories between the south coast fishermen and those of the West of Ireland. Others went toward the Cornish coastline and developed linkages with the fishermen of Newlyn. Today these men are the fishing elders and are considered of *'the old attitude'* by a younger generation who just as the previous generation are more energetic to win their fortune from the sea. They transformed the identity of the Kilmore fishing network in relation to its local maritime catching territories steaming their boats further into new territory and adopting techniques seen on bigger and better vessels.

1.7. A modern fishing network emerges

In 1970 there was a total of 21 boats berthed in Kilmore Quay: within seven years this had increased to 32 offshore and inshore as a new generation took the initiative to push outwards. In 1972 a £182,000 extension to the harbour as well as an extension to the Co-op premises were opened by Mr. Jackie Fahey, T.D. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture. This extension would be damaged by a storm in 1974 while in the same year the Co-operative would lose its manager in difficult circumstances. These contingencies did not affect optimism in the fishing game as EEC membership became a reality and in 1975 there was a delivery of five new trawlers totalling £700,000 investment.

The 1977 fleet contained 26 boats over 50 ft. and totalling 4,720 kW (fishing mainly whitefish and ray) that were owned by nineteen men. Four of these boats were owned by James Doyle from Drinagh close to Wexford town who was a garage proprietor. He had *'got into fishing'* by salvaging an Arklow built boat and developing from there *'his association with the parish'*, although he never skippered any of his boats. In 1975 Doyle was involved in buying the *'Mary Agnes'* a 128 ft. Dutch trawler that was the biggest in Ireland at the time. Significantly two of Kilmore's successful offshore skipper-owners of 1980s and who came from the *'outside'* started their skippering careers in Doyle boats. Another of his skippers did not survive boat ownership during the 1980s. 17 of the Kilmore vessels were built in Ireland while the remaining 7 came from the outside. Only two of the 26 boats remain fishing out of the Quay in 2000. Average time spent at sea on single trips: four days. Average crews for white fish on boats of more than 240 HP including skipper: 4 (this was increased to 6 during the herring season).

Total number of men fishing offshore on boats over 50 ft.: an average of 85 men was considered reasonable for the Kilmore fleet at that time, with up to 120 engaged during the herring season. Trip times were considered to be an average of 4 working days at sea and with an annual trip total of 28 trips or 120 working days at sea per year²⁸.

This gives a local offshore fishing effort index for 1977: 210.

Crew ties were stronger and loyalty part of the unspoken rules of the game. *'At that time you stayed with men rather than a boat. Fishing was with family and friends, almost I'd say, a fun thing. 'Jumping ship' was rare and there was little greed. Greed came into fishing around the mid-1980s'*: 42 years old Quay born deckhand fishing since he left school at sixteen.

owners when the boat was sold. This is no longer practice today as wreck positions are inscribed on computer disks and thus the information is no longer linked to a presence in the wheelhouse.

²⁸ Trying to establish a comparative port fishing effort using the product of capacity and activity for the group's offshore vessels is very approximate. By dividing the total kW by the number of boats over 50 ft. then multiplying by the average annual time at sea for one man and dividing by 100, a correlative index can be used only to give a tendency curve of the localised fishing effort. The lower number of days at sea in 1970 was due to the size of the boats and their difficulties at sea during bad weather.

1977 Skippers' Profile: 16 of the skipper-owners (65%) were directly related to the core Kilmore Quay fishing families; while Jim Doyle opened the way forward for 'outsider' boat ownership to develop from the dominant family core of the network.

Eight of the present day Kilmore 'elder' skipper-owners were engaged in the 1977 fleet with an average age today of 52 years.

1.8. 1980s - McLaughlin, CFP and Tempest

The native offshore fishing field during the eighties was transformed by three structural conditions: increasing interest and fuel rates, diminishing pelagic stock with the closure of the Celtic Sea in 1982 and the absorption of the European Common Fisheries' measures to regularise institutional control by quotas. The logic of the CFP regulatory control of commercial fishing would over the decade insert differentiation in Irish local fleets. At a national level, the 'McLaughlin judgement' by Costello, J. in 1986 would frame the legal work relation between boat owner and crewmen in the context of those embedding European structures. A deckhand was considered judicially as a 'co-adventurer' with the owner in the fishing expedition and therefore could not be legally considered as an employee. This ended boat owners' legal responsibility to pay tax and P.R.S.I. on behalf of their crewmen shifting the responsibility back to deckhands to manage their social welfare situations. P.A.Y.E and retirement pensions for share fishermen as a distinctive socio-economic category had been negotiated by the Irish Fishermen's Organisation with the Minister Charles Haughey in 1979. This bureaucratic recognition of a formal socio-economic category for Irish fishing crewmen would evaporate after the McLaughlin decision. Unlike their counterparts in other CFP states Irish fishermen would be placed in a no-man's space between dominant boat owners and a weakened State control over its marine territories²⁹.

The McLaughlin jurisprudence decision delivered some seven years later clearly demarcated fishing work relations from other negotiated unskilled categories³⁰. As one spokesperson put it: *'The Costello decision was clear and set the fudge in Ireland and how Irish fishing operates'*. This 'fudging' of dominant forces was confirmed by what became known as the Griffith Case taken by the Minister of Social Welfare and given

²⁹ The problem of the Irish State's sovereignty and ultimate ownership of its maritime regional territories after EEC entry in 1973 has never been resolved to any parties' satisfaction. Popular opinion has been that *'The Republic traded its fish to pay for its farmers'*. This view is the common misunderstanding of both a political and pragmatic problem. One of the results of the ambivalent topographical boundary between Irish coastal communities and their marine territories is to have pushed fishermen into marginal political positions often misunderstood by landed people. This in turn is linked to the wider problem of overall fishing and fiscal legitimacy under the State's natural resource management authority. If the Icelanders had set an example in the early 1970s it was that they had the small but committed national will thus the primary moral motivation to do so. It is clear today to anyone watching the bigger international fishing game that Irish fishing owes the CFP and not national policy for its technocratic development and confusion.

³⁰ There is no sea training *obligation* required for men to work on fishing boats in the Republic of Ireland therefore the 'unskilled' category applies. This does not mean that Irish fishermen are not good seamen as selection and learning was an integral part of how artisan fishing developed as discipline. However, holding a skipper's Class II ticket does not provide any statutory recognition for a man's fishing career. What it did as far as the findings of this study are concerned was to bind in men to fishing in the hope that some day they might be rewarded for their training investment. The reality of men gaining the wheelhouse without any training credentials has demoralised many of those trained crewmen today. According to the European Social Fund survey carried out in 1996-97 only 13% of Irish deckhands received any formal training while 64% of vessels had 'serious safety deflections'. See Lorna Siggins' article in *The Irish Times*, May 1st 1997.

February 14th 1992 that upheld the self-employment status of the share-fisherman. One retired Wexford skipper, (who began his career in 1947) called this the '*PRSI scandal*' and set it alongside the fuel crises of the 1980s as '*one of the principal causes that drove young men out of fishing as a career. We found ourselves like the blacks in the U.S. without any formal recognition, as if we no longer existed*'.

The Griffith judgement confirmed that legally there was no employer-employee relationship between a boat owner and a crewman of his fishing vessel: the primary working relationship was one of partnership in adventure. The Court's judgement declared however that: '*The Oireachtas has eschewed targeting participation in profits derived from fishing. They have only targeted persons employed*'. Minister Woods brought in the Social Welfare (No. 2) Act 1993 in an effort to deal with this eschewing of the 'fishermen's insurability' problem. The act proposed an Optional Contributors and Optional Contributions scheme for 'persons engaged in share-fishing' and earning over £2,500 per year as a 'principal means of livelihood'³¹.

The McLaughlin decision must be given context not just in its constitutional framing but its socio-economic one as well. The entry into vigour of the Common Fisheries Policy in 1983 with its equal access to fish principle, rapidly restraining Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and the first Multi-Annual Guidance Programme (MAGP I) opened the flank of an underdeveloped Irish fishing capacity to other competitive forces of the CFP fishing zone. Sustaining a native fishing effort was considered vital to holding ground while the new practices of the European enforcement were learned and national landings increased to obtain quota³². Problems relating to the social welfare of crewmen and their families were the least of the dominant players concerns in a national economy with an annual unemployment rate running close to 20%. It is not just the catching opportunities at sea which condition the working context of offshore fishing but those of the dominant local economy into which lateral linkages with its crewmen are nested. Kilmore Quay, unlike Howth or Clogherhead is relatively shielded due to its peninsular position from shifts in industrial infrastructures and opportunities on land.

³¹ Under the terms the Optional Contribution scheme share-fishermen pay a minimum of £250 per annum and are classed under Class P. There is a discretionary mechanism under the Department's Scope section that allows individual cases to be decided on. Initial admittance to the scheme totalled 116 for 1993/94, 70 in 1995/96 and this has dropped to a mere 3 declarations received in 1999. A total of 12 declarations were received by the Scope section. 174 deckhand declarations were received out of an estimated cohort of 1,800. A 1997 directive established the concept of a "contract of service" for share fishermen and such arrangements of expedition partnerships are regulated under Class S. As this study highlights the majority of the crewmen consider their work relationship to be employer/employee. The question as to why crewmen did not avail of this reasonable scheme has not been answered coherently although there is no shortage of opinions. One bureaucrat's experience put the problem in this context: '*Basically crewmen need representation in regard to their insurability. It must be inclusive rather than exclusive. Artisan family fishing distorts the whole picture. Crewmen working on commercial boats are in the same position as the subbies were on building sites in the 1970s*'. Sources: Department of Social Welfare and Family Affairs.

³² See 'Taxation of Fishermen' in *The Development of the Fisheries Industry*, Sector Consultative Committee, The Common Fisheries Policy, Dublin, 1984, p.72. The Committee advised adopting the same system as in the U.K., the U.S.A. and Canada treating share fishermen as self-employed '*as Ireland is the only English speaking country in the Northern Hemisphere which insists on treating share fishermen as employees and subject to PAYE*'. The Committee recommended that: (a) the local inspector of taxes receives the name and address of each member of the crew (b) the amount received by each member of the crew. They argued that since '*there was no cost incurred by the State and greater efficiency would result at operational level*' this should be recommended.

In the early days of CFP, enforcement was a question of policing geographical boundaries rather than imposing technical control. Whatever hindsight wisdom voiced regarding these legal judgements, the convention of self-employment for crews was affirmed to mobilise catching units as owners invested their savings into bigger and more powerful boats. The 'fudged' juridical nature of Irish fishing with its ambiguous ties being 'egalitarian' as far as the fishing expedition was concerned sustained the Kilmore fleet through the 1980s. What longer term social effects this has had on the crewmen cohort is treated in chapters 2 and 4 of this study.

By 1988 the total number of Kilmore boats over 50 ft. was 23 with a cumulative power of 6,873 kW (45% increase in kW from 1977). An estimated crewmen force of 90 men with an average trip time of 4 days or an annual average of 28 trips per year or 130 work days at sea.

This gives the local fishing effort index for 1988 a value: 388 (60% increase on the 1977 fishing effort index of 210).

On Saturday 16th December 1989 an event occurred that would result in a significant reorientation of Kilmore Quay as a home harbour. One of the worst storms of the century destroyed a major part of the pier, sunk two boats and damaged another ten. The total damage was estimated to be in the region of £90,000. A meeting the Sunday after the event is described in the following terms: *'The Co. Manager Mr. Noel Dillon; County engineer Phil Callery, Wexford Oireachtas members, local politicians and fishermen met in the Wooden House public house. The atmosphere was one of shock and emotion, as a decision was taken to seek a meeting with the Minister for the Marine in Dublin'*³³. The psychological and physical effects of this storm created the force to open up the closed world of illusionary self-dependency ties as they had evolved up until 1989. A local committee, composed of three men (two of them brothers), was formed to 'fight for a new harbour', political assurances were given to review Kilmore's position as a 'fishing community' and new forces penetrated the village habitat with the possibility of European Structural funding. Over one hundred years had passed since the last violent tempest had motivated Government and County officialdom to reconstruct a harbour for Kilmore Quay. At that time the reconstruction developed a commercial schooner business; this time the result would be the development of a 'luxury 55-berth marina' that re-orientated local perspective from a presupposed fishing dependency to a mixed-economy of maritime and green tourism markets. Onshore, a new community centre, *'The Stella Maris Centre'* was built with a £50,000 grant from the Wexford Organisation for Rural Development and opened in 1995.

The psychological shock and the uncertainty of the harbour's future as a 'safe home refuge' for larger boats shifted the fishing status hierarchy and confirmed conservative opinion that commercial fishing was outgrowing its local identity base at the Quay. The political result was to redevelop the harbour under the Department of the Marine specialist design that would respond to fishing's uncertain future now sanctioned by the natural contingency of the 1989 storm. The £3.5 million harbour development was opened May 27th 1997 by Minister for the Environment Brendan Howlin who declared that *'The facilities being opened here will greatly enhance fishery activities'*³⁴. There was

³³ John Power. *The Aftermath*, Kilmore Parish Journal, 1990, p.4.

³⁴ Joe Monaghan, *'Our new harbour...a dream fulfilled'*, Kilmore Parish Journal, 1998, p. 19. This author was also present at that ceremony and recorded the speeches made by the public representatives as part of a study dealing with how EU funding is perceived locally in rural Ireland. Only the local Chairman of the Kilmore Development Association made a direct reference to the 75% finance coming from the European Regional Funds. Another incident that marked this

no prior study undertaken to evaluate either the environmental impact of the new structure regarding the tidal coastline nor on the social fabric upholding of fishing as a way of life. This is not surprising given the necessary time schedule linked to Irish EU structural funding expediency and how this occurred in practice through the intermediary agency of poor bureaucratic structures. The ambivalent orientation of the new harbour, as both fishing and leisure space, is given context in Section 3. It is relevant to place this new harbour space in relation to the emergence of a new formation for offshore fishing during the early nineties that cumulated the modernising fishing effort out of the Quay: the O'Flaherty Brothers' Fishing Partnership.

1.9. The O'Flaherty Brothers' Fishing Partnership

"The biggest problem the banks had was here was a bunch of farmer's sons coming in to buy a fishing boat. That was the problem. Fishing was not our background and the bank was fixed on the experience like that".

John O' Flaherty in a group interview recorded March 6th 2000.

Local fishing networks successfully expand their catching disciplines when existing ties are reselected into larger management units and their risk-taking ventures are mobilised by a new catching ecology. Four O'Flaherty brothers got together in 1987 to discuss a strategy to provide a business project that would bring them back to make a living in Kilmore Quay. Offshore fishing offered them this opportunity. They were all sons of a local farmer but each of them, having completed his Leaving Certificate and being crewmen on the family boats at the Quay, had gone their separate ways. Brendan O'Flaherty had stayed fishing with one of the local beam trawlers fishing off the Cornish coast and gained valuable knowledge of fisheries there in 1986. Denis O'Flaherty, who works for Aer Lingus, sought to apply his skills relating to commercial aircraft maintenance and management to fishing if the right boat could be found to start the enterprise. John O'Flaherty after working at fishing and in industry had gone to Australia where his brother Seamus, (now responsible for boat and crew maintenance), was also working. Seamus O'Flaherty had begun his career in the Irish Merchant Navy.

They decided in 1987 that they would go to Holland, prospect the second-hand beam trawler market, find their boat, approach a bank and seek a one of the last fishing licenses being issued by the Department of the Marine. All of this they achieved within the space of six months and in January 1988 the *Hendrijke*, a 526 kW 30-metre beam trawler with 700 HP Kronberg engine, was bought without public aid and arrived in Kilmore Quay. Twelve years later, the O'Flaherty brothers own eight second hand vessel totalling 5,450 kW with nearly 1,500 gross tonnes, have a partnership agreement with another 576 kW twin rigged trawler and an annual turnover of close to £5 million. *'The Hendrijke was a lucky boat, we never looked back from her'*. The five O'Flaherty brothers (Michael joined them later to market the fish) proved that catching fish could become an outsiders business if hard work and shrewd planning are co-ordinated.

The fishing partnership of John and Brendan (with Denis as overall manager) established a new style of fishing enterprise. Their collective efforts to sustain the first two vessels, the *Hendrijke* (1988) and the *Newgrange* (1991) pushed Brendan and John to stay at sea

event was that a number of fishermen stayed outside the harbour in protest at the protocol adopted by Wexford County Council concerning who was to be invited to the opening ceremony function. Without going into detail, suffice to record, that following the insistence of the national deputies, the whole village was invited. From a sociological point of view this event was significant highlighting the decentralisation of central control over ports such as Kilmore Quay to County Management.

almost without stoppage for the first three years. In 1993, they decided to buy the locally owned Deirdre Mairéad and introduced a new ten-day-on/ten-day-off roster system for the three vessels. Their catching strategy was simple, effective and profitable: keep better equipped boats at sea all the time, reinvest in tonnage on the open market, offer crews time off and motivation by giving each vessel's skipper full autonomy to fish and manage his crew. The share convention of 60-40 square up between owner and crew (after fuel and food costs have been deducted) set the basis of their present day agency relationship with 55 men working the roster system. This figure has fluctuated due to pressure from fuel prices while the share convention has become more a percentage negotiation between different crews in relation to their catching units' work ratios. It is, by all accounts, an important fishing enterprise achievement and merits a detailed case study for future reference about how offshore fishing can engender profits through sibling partnerships that diffuse mutual trust into collective participation³⁵.

For the purposes of this study however what is of objective concern are the effects produced by this cumulative agency effort on the existing fishing ties that bind catching units into a socialised identity focused on its harbour locale. The fact is that the O'Flaherty fishing partnership and its nine catching units did not emerge in isolation from the Kilmore fishing network but built its agency ties on local knowledge and the structures already embedded into its social tissue³⁶. By retaining individual leadership ties under the share convention that in turn assures dominance over crewmen, the O'Flaherty fishing partnership delegates a new dynamic to each of its units to reproduce profits and sustain its investment momentum. On the surface this seems not to create turbulence among other catching units of the Quay but below it has tightened constraints on relations of the *'old attitude'* and coercive means to keep a balance between a family hierarchy and their ageing deckhand cohort. The O'Flahertys introduced a higher level of market dependency both on the supply (spare-parts, fishing gear, etc.) and the product side, (selling fish directly to Spain from 1996 onwards), thus forcing local owners to revise their attitude as being self-sufficient individuals inside a localised harbour autonomy.

The result is that the local catching effort has increased importantly and the length of time at sea has changed dimension as a new commercial regime imposes its agency on the race to fish. The O'Flahertys seek to integrate wider commercial control over their catching enterprise while individual artisan boats must continue to operate on risk management scales that are disproportionate to the grouping of nine vessels, with over 1,600 official tonnage and fifty crewmen³⁷. The fact is that such tonnage *power* gives access to greater

³⁵ The O'Flaherty brothers insisted in an interview carried out March 6 2000 on the fact that theirs is 'a partnership agreement' (or what one of them also called a 'loose partnership based on trust' in a previous interview) between three brothers. Their trading company 'Saltees Fish' is a formal limited company.

³⁶ The MFV Hendrijke was skippered for the first year by a local Kilmore man and then by his brother. When both left, Brendan O'Flaherty who had three years experience at sea and was 23 years of age was obliged to go into the wheelhouse. With the purchase of the MFV Newgrange Brendan took command of her and John had to take the MFV Hendrijke, again without any formal sea training. However, local crewmen engaged by them were experienced enough to assure them and they learned the catching game by necessity. Brendan: *'I had good lads working for me and they are well capable of fishing, of going out to find the grounds but when you are skipper you have to have more than just that....You have to know everything'*.

³⁷ The tonnage value of the O'Flaherty's investment is worth close to £4.5m on the open market today thus underlining the exclusiveness of the structured offshore fishing field. Any institutional proposition to regularise Irish fishing futures must recognise that it is inside this monopolised field of different fishing enterprises that regulatory change can only be effected. By allowing a free

catching opportunities and the possibility of each O'Flaherty skipper to decide his speculative strategies, including crew recruitment, assures the unitary force of attraction for their fleet. That attraction to mobilise individual crewmen remains the share fishing convention that does not differentiate between cumulative risk management of commercial agency fishing and individual risk control on artisan boats.

One of the key elements that confirms trust between crews and the O'Flaherty management is the patrons' ability to listen to their skippers' needs and to reinvest quickly into improved catching technology. Thus the *natural* order of the local fishing expedition has been distanced by direct linkage to global market prices, creating anomalies as far as individual artisan catching units are concerned. What is happening is known as decoupling as new ties reshape chains of opportunity for those men who have few or no links with the local kinship hierarchy and whose fishing objective is individualist rather than 'a way of life'³⁸. This phenomenon of decoupling and reforming catching units engendered on local strategic alliances but now distanced from any socialised values of a localised identity is what is occurring across the offshore fishing network based out of Kilmore Quay.

Section 2 gives details of the overall Kilmore Quay fleet with the results of a questionnaire to build a crosscut profile of crewmen and their dependencies around the port's topography. It shows that subjective opinion regarding the present share-fishing practice is most contested by those men crewing for owners with whom there is no familiar relationship. Most of these men have no training or professional recognition but still operate 24+ metre vessels coerced by a putative free labour market that gives boat owners arbitrary dominance while lowering the ticket of entry for those on native fishing boats without having any prior experience. The more competitive the local market for crewmen becomes, the weaker the ties that link work convention to the family-run boats thus the perceived social autonomy of the port. Uncertainty, real or manipulated, decouple and reconstitute offshore fishing crews, many of whose men realise today that they cannot progress to individual boat ownership as owning tonnage remains beyond their investment possibility. Without the impulse toward individual autonomy incorporated in individual boat ownership those men holding skippers' tickets find themselves '*trapped*' between the 'old attitude' and the new commercial fishing regime.

market to exist for tonnage sales and their transfer, corporate monopoly forces now set the barrier of entry into the Irish fishing field and not institutional constraints.

³⁸ The term is defined by American network specialist Harrison C. White as '*Coupling can be traced in networks through strings of ties. But equally important is decoupling, which restarts social clocks and can buffer one chain of actions from another as well as freeing one actor from another's ties*'. In Harrison C. White, *Identity and Control - A Structural Theory of Social Action*, U.S., Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 78.

1.10. Conclusion

There are now 25 offshore fishing vessels registered at the Kilmore Quay home harbour with a total kW of 16,812. There are 130 men working on the decks of these vessels and the average number of fishing days is given as 150. This provides a local fishing effort (L.F.E.) index for 2000: 1008 or a 300% increase since 1988 see Table 1 below.

Table 1.1

Local Fishing Effort Index for Kilmore Quay 1977-2000

YEAR	NO. OF BOATS	KW TOTAL	TOTAL MEN	TIME AT SEA	L.F.E. INDEX
1977	26	4,720	85	120 days	210
1988	23	6,873	90	130 days	388
2000	25	16,812	130	150 days	1008

While this figure is approximate of tendencies of the cumulative effort of men and boats situated in a given harbour locale, it provides a synoptic on what has happened during 25 years of fishing modernisation out of Kilmore Quay. The social forces that once pushed men toward commercial fishing as a way of life, (embodied in Tommy Power's phrase: *'fishing is the only thing we have here, other than the farmers'*), provided the conditions for five sons of a local farmer to become one of the more successful fishing partnerships in Ireland. Capital risk investment, foresight, opportunism, contingency timing, both natural and market caused, mechanical skills, exceptional luck all established some of these conditions of success. Inheritance of the dispositions and human resources where these elements convert energies into today's drive for efficiency are the products of past generations of fishermen and their work. Without their invisible force there would be no fishing habitat or men to *'go down the harbour'*.



Section 2

Profile of an Offshore Fishing Network

2.1. Introduction

This section presents a profile of the present working network constituting offshore fishing from Kilmore Quay. Three contexts are presented:

- (i) The general offshore fleet profile.
- (ii) The results of a sample survey questionnaire.
- (iii) Selected extracts of individual full-length interviews.

2.2. Port demographic space

Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford is designated as a rural town (rather than a 'small village' for the 1992 census) for the national census collection and had a population of 406 persons distributed in 129 households in 1996. The Quay is a curacy nested in the southern tip of the Kilmore parish space that includes three other R.C. curacies: Kilmore, Tomhaggard and Bridgetown giving a total population of 3,227 persons with a work population of 2,188 or 6.1% of the active population of Co. Wexford³⁹.

Unemployment ratios for this area are estimated at 8.5% and the CSO socio-economic indicators show that nearly 600 or 26% are working in the semi-skilled or unskilled categories (the national average being 17.5%). If local agriculture, (farming constitutes 17% of Co. Wexford's active population) and other non-categorised persons are taken out of the picture (a total of 500 persons) then this cohort rises to 35% of Kilmore area's active population. Skilled manual workforce amounts to 254 or 15% of the total outside of agriculture.

Demographic facts taken from church registers of births, marriages and deaths for the last thirty years reflect regularity, while the proportion of population by age group shows 0-14: 27%. 15-24: 19%. 25-44: 25%. 45-64: 22%. 65+: 7%. This proportion is slightly closer to national patterns than for the rest of Co. Wexford. The Kilmore fishing network is nested in a stable hinterland rural economy and unlike Western peripheral topographies does not have structural dependencies on income support or problems linked with emigration⁴⁰. However, to get a representation of the weight of commercial fishing in this population it is not possible to depend on national statistical collection. Bundled elsewhere into agriculture and self-employment categories only 201 persons are recognised to work in fishing in Co. Wexford for 1996, the largest maritime county in Ireland⁴¹.

³⁹ Local Population Report, Co. Wexford, Central Statistics Office, Dublin, 1998.

⁴⁰ See in this respect White, F. Costelloe. *Socio-Economic Evaluation of the Impact of the Aquaculture Industry in Counties Donegal, Galway, Kerry and Cork*. Dublin, Marine Institute Resource Series, No. 7, 1999, p. 29.

⁴¹ See Table 36, LPR, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

2.3. Port's national ranking

Ranked seventh in the national landing by port table with 2,123 tonnes landed in 1998 (worth £3.414 million) Kilmore Quay under this category only constitutes 2.3% of the national total of 152.4 million tonnes⁴². However, many of Kilmore's larger beam trawlers land elsewhere principally in Waterford, Dunmore East and Cobh. Landing figures do indicate the growth of the home catching effort from the opening of the new port from 941 tonnes in 1996, 1,626 in 1997 to 3,414 tonnes in 1998 or an average of 40% per annum increase while average fish prices slightly declined by 4.6%. Principal species landed: monk, megrim, plaice and scallops. The local fishing effort, (the dynamic of capacity and time at sea), has increased dramatically by 300% over the last twelve years with 8 beam trawlers belonging to the O'Flaherty Brothers fishing enterprise and aquaculture harvesting of scallops by 12 boats with specific and polyvalent licences.

2.4. Men and Boats⁴³

There are a total of 25 Kilmore boats that fish offshore, i.e. that spend more than three nights away from shore. These are composed presently of 12 vessels equipped with 305 scallop dredges, 9 beam trawlers and 3 trawlers, two of them twin-riggers; The port's licence distribution is 12 polyvalent, 11 specific, 1 pelagic and 1 beam trawler. Average age of the 9 O'Flaherty vessels: 24 years (The jointly-owned French built twin-rigger trawler 'St. Josse' is the youngest boat in the fleet at 12 years). Average age of the rest of the fleet's boats: 33 years (the oldest boat fishing being the 'Vrigheid' at 51 years followed by the 'Elly Gerda' at 42 years). 10 of the fleet's boats can be considered family-run boats with direct ties with Kilmore Quay ownership.

A total of 130 men work these boats and all are implicated in the share fishing convention even though this tradition has been modified to an arbitrary 'profit--percentages' arrangement. Excluding skippers' shares at one and a half times the net-catch this could amount to an annual gross income of between £1.75 millions and £2 millions depending on catching opportunities (here calculated on an average of 150 days fishing days)⁴⁴.

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Table 2.1 Average trip times of Kilmore offshore fishermen

Offshore Long	Offshore Medium	Offshore Short
60	70	Inshore only now

⁴² Table 2 Fishery Statistics, 1998, Central Statistics Office, December, 1999. The landing figures for Waterford are not given although enquiry was made to get this figure from the CSO offices but to no avail.

⁴³ Data given here was collected from local sources and has a probable error margin of 5%. A number of cross checks were done while official sources particularly the Department of the Marine were helpful. The objective was to give a reasonable representation of tendencies to allow a control frame for the questionnaire and interviews to be relevant.

⁴⁴ A simple rule of thumb calculation used by offshore crewmen is a gross figure of £100 per day's fishing.

Offshore Long: 10 days<trips>14 days. (10 on/10off, back to back every 6th)
Offshore medium: 6 days<trips>8days. (4X4 with every second weekend off)
Offshore short: 72 hours<trips>5days.
 These figures are dependent on weather conditions.

Table 2.2 Training and Tickets

Skipper-owners	Skipper non-owners	Crewmen
10	15	14

There are an estimated 29 Class 11 skippers ticket holders with another 10 men holding different training modules from safety, deckhand and radio tickets. 30% of the cohort has received some formal sea-training which compares well with the national average of 17%. One man had formal training before joining a fishing crew at the age of 17 years. Men who received training in Greencastle or elsewhere (3 had training in the U.K.) did so after an average of three years already at sea. There is no programme for distance continuing education for Irish fishermen other than the existing modules based in Greencastle and the new school in Castletownbere. Time and loss of earnings are the constant reply to why training modules are not pursued.

Table 2.3 Average age of Kilmore offshore crewmen

16-21 yrs.	22-27 yrs	28-33 yrs	34-38 yrs	39-45 yrs	45 yrs+
4	45	44	22	7	8
2%	35%	34%	17%	5%	7%

The average age of the O'Flaherty crew cohort of 55 men is estimated at 33 years; while for the rest of the Kilmore offshore fleet 30 years, where men holding a skipper's II ticket have an average age of just under 29 years. Over 70% of the men are under 35 years thus might qualify for premiums for vessel acquisition as the bulk of them have more than 5 years fishing experience⁴⁵.

Table 2.4 Origins of the Kilmore offshore crewmen

	K. Quay	KQ+5Kms	Wexford	Ireland	Elsewhere
O'Flahertys	21	4	12	14	4
Others	42	15	10	5	3
Total	63 (48%)	19 (14%)	22 (17%)	19 (14%)	7 (7%)

⁴⁵ Council regulation (EC) No 2792/1999 of 17th December 1999 laying down the detailed rules and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance to the fisheries sector. Official Journal L 337, 30/12/1999 p. 0010-28. See Article 12.3.D. (Hereafter this Council Regulation is referred to simply as Council Regulation (EC) 2792/1999).

The Irish origins of the 14% Ireland cohort are from Dunmore East, Waterford, Balbriggan and Cork. Duncannon and Ballyhack make up the biggest percentage of men from Co. Wexford. The spatial distribution of crewmen around the home port of Kilmore has widened thus effectively changing identification with a social community ('village') space to that of a fishing pole that attracts men from the smaller fishing harbour locales of the South-East. This fact is significant for the future as it brings into perspective the idea of the socio-economic management frame for coastal human resources and aquatic resources linked to sustaining innovative development.

Table 2.5 Civil status of Kilmore offshore crewmen

Single	Living partner	Married	Unknown
65 (50%)	22 (17%)	36 (28%)	7 (5%)

A number of men are separated from their wives but this constitutes a small percentage of the overall marriage figure.

Table 2.6 Men related with original Kilmore fishing families

Directly related	No family ties to Kilmore fishing
37	93

There is a core group of 17 sons of second-generation Kilmore fishermen with an average age of 30 years. Eleven of these men have skipper's Class II tickets. Only one of them owns his own boat outright while six of them skipper vessels on a share and a half basis for others and on 3 skipper family owned boats managed still by their fathers. Only three of these men are married, a fourth lives with a partner. The high percentage of men not married is not surprising from a sociological point of view as reproduction of fishing patrimonies i.e. catching units are in most cases impossible⁴⁶. For those successful men who have reached the end of their catching careers, they have to decide whether they can now produce an inheritor or a productive boat to decommission thus capitalise on in order to retire from the game. Some men are caught in the double-bind of not having sons willing to come on board or whose sons have left their vessel because of father-son tensions. The problem of the *continuity* of a commercial fishing patrimony and its knowledge-based disposition needs addressing by management authority instruments to direct men toward a better understanding of the implications of inheritance and transfer⁴⁷. This is a significant difference between patrimony transfers in the agricultural sector where women play an influential role in negotiating compromise between siblings and

⁴⁶ 'Catching units' here include both existing crew ties and a specific *knowledge* capital of fishing practice and fishery grounds also transferred from father to son.

⁴⁷ I emphasise national institutional instruments as Council Regulation (EC) No. 2792/1999 does offer a schema for early retirement (see Article 12). However, preliminary sociological evidence collected for this report highlights problems linked to the historical development of Irish commercial fishing patrimonies that will require both native research and possible practical solutions to resolve.

patriarchal dominance. The social problem of patriarchal control, inheritance and a fishing patrimony transfer is treated in the final Section.

2.5. Profile synopsis

The general profile of the Kilmore offshore fishing network and its production structures of trip on/trip off demersal beam trawling and medium trip scallop fishing reflect how adoption of wider control spans effects a social identity linked with a harbour locale. More than fifty percent of crewmen have origins outside the village of Kilmore Quay as catching units consolidate relative positions of strength and weaknesses in the fishing field. Two offshore discipline fields (or 'segments' as they are officially known) operate and compete side by side out of the harbour locale: the O'Flaherty Brothers' partnership identity that dominate demersal production for the Spanish market and the scallop fishing boats delivering to processors now organising a scallop producers' group identity known as the 'South-East Shellfisherman's Association', chaired by a Kilmore Quay owner. The fish market is now both European and international and this fact cannot be isolated from internal change in production and marketing ties that structure the specific profile of Kilmore's fishing effort.

If those men with kin ties to continuing family boat ownership are removed from the equation, some 100 men form the labour market to sustain production of these two sectors. Adjusted work ratios and their productivity evaluations are constantly renegotiated across the various sub-groups: owners and crewmen, the owners' harbour cluster⁴⁸, the various catching units and between crewmen themselves. It may appear to be a 'free labour market' but it is the local network ties (embodied in the local fishing story) that evaluate different crew formations and their profit opportunities between dependent and competing units. What was a closed ordering of relations up until the new harbour was developed, has been opened, by market contingency, to wider selection and participation possibilities from other small harbour spaces in the area. This is how the commercialisation of the Irish fishing field is evolving within the context of small harbour locales along the south and east coasts.

Over the last 12 months there has been increased tensions and movement as each man seeks to maximise his investment faced with increases of high fuel costs and competition between owners to engage experienced crewmen. Owners of the 'old attitude', who engage their sons or younger skippers to fish their boats, form a status cluster on the harbour front to manage their units from there. A new focus point has been established on the harbour front as owners gather each morning to oversee boat repairs and landings. The result of this is that the 60-40 share-convention, although it may be there in name, is hardly recognisable in practice. Each expedition has its distinctive square-up deal with its crewmen and what may have been a reasonably even playing field has become obfuscated to secure profits and repayments under different work schedules⁴⁹. As one of the specific

⁴⁸ The 'owners' harbour cluster' group is a recent phenomenon. Some owner-skippers of artisan vessels have now reached fifty years and over. They no longer go to sea but manage their boats on shore. The legal problem of their status needs to be addressed regarding agency law and the share fishing convention: for example does their power of delegation imply full or partial responsibility for their skipper's at sea activity?

⁴⁹ The following is an account of a regular 10-day trip beam trawler's daily work practice and schedule. It was recorded as part of this study's evidence.

"There is no beginning or end to the day or night on a fishing boat. You work constantly for 8 to 10 24-hour days at sea, depending on the weather. Your boat's aim is 7 hauls every 24 hours and you land twice on a trip of 8 days. You haul the bags every 3 hours and you try to clear the deck.

characteristics of the share convention are ties sanctioned by trust in profit transparency linked to downstream fish sales, increasing unknown variables such as financial repayment schedules and technology inputs have changed mentalities regarding the traditional hunt expedition.

To understand better how crewmen experience the tightening of margins of freedom at all levels of fishing production a sample was selected of forty men across a crosscut of 12 Kilmore catching units. Each was asked a set of questions and opinion was collected to build a picture of daily life as an offshore fisher. The following are the results of that questionnaire sample and must be given context within the general profile represented here.

2.6. 'People and Change in Offshore Fishing': Fishermen's Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was constructed around four contexts: 'Fishing Career'; 'Onshore Situation'; 'Finance and Security'; 'Any Other Business-please give details you or your partner consider to be importance for this study'. The objective was to record opinion related to human resources, dispositions, changes in crewing practice and social life out of Kilmore Quay. Part of the initial work was to make local people aware that the study was taking place and to gain trust to objectify what was changing for those engaged in fishing. There was general approval particularly by women that such a study entitled '*People and Change in Fishing - Kilmore Quay Study*' was taking place.

Initially 130 questionnaires each with stamped addressed envelopes were distributed to the owners of 25 offshore fishing vessels from Kilmore Quay. This was carried out during the first week of August 2000 without objections being offered by any of the owners. A two-week delivery time was asked for. The initial results were very disappointing but not unexpected. Only ten questionnaires were returned four by post with the rest collected. Some owners had given out their questionnaires to crewmen while others had conveniently 'left them aside'. Over the next four weeks a direct approach was adopted and questionnaires filled out orally while the vessels were in port. There were no objections to this and with hindsight a direct approach to crewmen may have provided more rapid results.

A total of forty completed questionnaires were assembled representing a 30% crosscut sample of the Kilmore Quay offshore fishing network. Lengthy individual interviews were recorded with about 25 persons including wives and partners that helped to establish standpoints from owners to young deckhands. The results are given a '*percentage optic*' under each context to test control in relation to the general profile.

The cod-ends of the net are pulled over the conveyor and emptied. There is always a big mess of all sorts. Two guys box the fish from the conveyor while the third guts them. The skipper is in the wheelhouse. That leaves you approx. two hours for kip in between hauls. Over the 24-hour period, you try to get in 10 hours broken sleep and another two hours for eating. A bell wakes you for every pull and you have five minutes to get out on deck. There are five watches of two hours each. You have to take two watches sometimes. The skipper is up all day generally for twelve hours. Over the years you get used to this routine. The work is less physical than before with the use of electric winches but it's the broken hours that make it so difficult and so anti-social. It's always a gas to have a new man come on board who goes to his bunk at eleven o'clock to sleep. 'Good night' we say, 'see you in an hour and a half'. It's always the same reply: what you cannot be serious?''.

Fishing Career

Where were you born?

Kilmore Quay village: 18.

5 miles from Quay: 8

Co. Wexford: 5

Rest of Ireland: 5

Outside Ireland: 4

If so where: Newlyn, Cornwall: 2, Rest of UK: 2.

Percentage optic: 55% born outside Kilmore Quay village space.

Skippers' average age (those who skippered a fishing vessel at least once): **34 years**

Deckhands' average age: **30 years.**

Are you directly related to a fishing family?

If 'Yes' could you give relation: Father 19.

Other family relation: 4

If 'No', did you go fishing through contact with: Boat owner: 0 Crew friend: 17.

Percentage optic: 57% of the sample are linked to fishing through family ties while 43% of men came into the fishing game through a crew acquaintance.

Did you complete your Leaving Certificate?

Yes: 12

No: 28

Percentage optic: 70% left school before completing their leaving certificate.

Did you go fishing directly after school?

Yes: 28.

No: 12 (of that half went to work in fish processing factories)

Percentage optic: 30% worked elsewhere before going fishing.

Did you receive any formal training for fishing or any sea work?

Yes: 20

No: 20

If 'Yes' could you give details please:

Deckhand tickets: 4 (two of which completed in UK)

Radio and other tickets: 4

Skipper's Class II: 12

Percentage optic: 60% of the sampled persons who skipper boats hold Skipper's Class II tickets. However, profiles of the other men many of who have more than seven years skippering experience indicate that they received no training whatsoever but learned on the task.

How many years offshore fishing experience:

1-3 years: 4

4-7 years: 9

More than 7 years: 28

Percentage optic: 70% of men questioned have more than 7 years fishing experience.

Are you fishing as a: Share-fisherman Receiving a PAYE wage

All respondents classed themselves as share-fishermen.

Have you always fished out of Kilmore Quay?

Yes: 23

No: 17

Ports where you have found berths: 12 in Ireland, 5 in UK.

Percentage optic: Over 40% have fished elsewhere at one stage in their careers.

Have you experience of:

Basic deckhand work: 3.

General deckhand duties including watch: 12

Engineer: 5

Skippering: 20

Percentage optic: 50% have at one stage skippered a fishing expedition.

How many days away from home on your average trip:

4 days: 0

6 days: 20

8 days: 8

10 days: 11

More than 10 days: 1

Percentage optic: 70% of men spend between 6-8 days (4-5 days fishing) at sea on average trips and are mainly engaged in scallop fishing.

What is the average number of trips per year:

20-25

25-30

30-35

35+

Percentage optic: 95% responded to the '30-35 category' with 30 cited as the optimum, weather permitting. This would provide an average 160-day at sea for scallop fishing per annum or approx. 26 weeks. Allowing for a 43 week year for the larger beam trawlers those working a 'ten-day on ten-day off' system are at sea for an estimated average of 150 days or 21 weeks in the year. These can only be approximate averages as every catching unit has its specific work practices, number of shots etc., and contingency strategies during bad weather.

What type of fishing are you working at?

Beaming: 15

Scalloping: 28

Trawling: 2

Percentage optic: There are 12 boats (8 are family run) equipped with an estimated 308 dredges for scallop fishing out of 25 offshore fishing vessels tied at the Quay. For this crosscut questionnaire samples were taken across all disciplines and ranks, including family and non-family tied crews.

Do you consider fishing to be your only working skill?

Yes: 28

No: 12

If 'No' can you say whether you would work:

Anywhere onshore: 6. Sea-related only: 6.

Percentage optic: 70% of respondents regarded their only working possibility as fishing, although some claimed in the comments section that they would like to see training to allow them to have an option to come ashore.

Onshore Situation

Civil Status:

Single: 14

Married: 13

Living with partner: 13

Number of dependent children (under 18 years of age): 43

Average age of dependent children: 7 years

Is your partner working and if so what is her work?

Yes: 12.

No: 14.

Percentage optic: 10 of the married women are not working outside the home while 10 of the partners are (4 of who are full-time).

Average age of men living with a partner: 31 years. Average age of men married: 37 years.

Living accommodation:

Living in family house: 9

Living in rented accommodation: 15 (7 of these are public housing).

Own house: 13

Other arrangements: 2 are living in mobile homes on own site.

Percentage optic: 33% of men own their houses.

Situation of living accommodation:

Kilmore Quay Village: 18

Radius 5 miles from Quay: 17

Co.Wexford: 5.

Percentage optic: 55% of respondents live outside Kilmore Quay village space.

Do you play a sport when on shore?

No: 34

Yes: 6

Do you own a car?

Yes: 30

No: 10

Have you a regular holiday from fishing with family or friends:

Yes: 17

No: 23

Percentage optic: Regular holidays were declared by nearly 45% of respondents with a profile of an average age of 30 years and living with partner. Very few had active sporting ties or other forms of socialisation with their community on-shore. The traditional fishing habitat is very concentrated, socially isolated around tight circuits and rituals that affirm a 'learned helplessness' regarding dealing with the outside world. This concentrated social universe around the village habitat has begun to open with the influence of the marina and tourism, but only recently. Many declared that both lack of time and the fact that they had never played sport at school were the causes. Those not owning a car were mainly situated in the deckhand only category.

Finance and Security

Are you satisfied with the current share-fisherman's situation, i. e. being considered self-employed for tax purposes?

Yes: 15

No: 23

Don't know: 2

If 'No' would you wish to return to a PAYE situation under a special fishing regime?

Yes: 21

Don't know: 2.

Percentage optic: Over 50% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with present share-fishing regime. The profile of the dissatisfied cohort is of an average age of 34 years of age, 70% of who have skippered during their careers and 40% of who hold Class 11 tickets but no kin ties with the boat ownership they work. Most of them indicate two problems:

- (i) There should be clear choice offered by vessel owners between self-employment and PAYE regimes upon engagement. 75% of dissatisfied answered that '**Yes they were concerned about their tax situation**'. Most indicated that vessel owners should be responsible for tax payment at source instead of the present regime of being categorised as 'self-employed'. The crewmen's practical problem is one of time and management of financial resources in a world where square-up payments and 'subs' are given in cash and recorded generally on hand written pieces of non-headed notepaper.
- (ii) Men holding Class II tickets and those men skippering without any training but with recognised experience tend to agree that it is an unfair playing field. What

was most often quoted was that today *'those who were serious about fishing'* were competing against those *'who were only in it for the money'*. This should not surprise as there was never a ticket of entry placed on working on Irish offshore fishing boats. Crew recruitment is organised around the socio-economic conditions of individually managed catching units rather than any national set of training and work norms. This in turn is related to the difficulty Irish fishing has experienced to move on from conventional practices to the rationalised management of its various local fleets. Mentalities and education are at the centre of this change not technology. Deckhands who agreed with the present convention had an average age of 28 years, half of them linked to family boats and 60% were single. The majority of skippers holding tickets and happy with the present situation had kinship ties with boat ownership, thus inheritance chances.

Do you consider yourself as an employee or as a partner?

Employee: 36

Partner: 4

One respondent who is beam trawling wrote: *'team'*

Percentage optic: 90% of respondents considered their work status as being an employee of the boat owner. While there may have been hesitation regarding the first question dealing with satisfaction with the share-fishing system there was no such hesitation about this question. Thus share fishermen *'employed as partners'* under the 1997 review by the Department of Social Welfare and Family Affairs has little *practical* relevance for the vast majority of men working on offshore boats out of Kilmore. This may be the key element to reconsidering self-regulation or any optional system as a valid solution to deal with the 'share fishermen's insurability' problem. What is important here is to understand share fishing as a set of local practices rather than any codified set of rules governing rights and responsibilities.

Regarding your tax situation, does this concern you?

Yes: 24

No: 16

Percentage optic: There was a high correlation between dissatisfaction with share-fishing practices and a declared concern for individual tax situations. The question was posed in order to get a general trend rather than any precise information that may have caused reaction against the study's objective. General opinion is that there is little tax conformity among deckhands which severely weakens their negotiation position and overall social partnership possibilities. This increases their submission to 'understanding' owners whose principal concern is to get their boat out to sea. The payment of tax is enmeshed with P.R.S.I and is understood only in an immediate trade-off scenario: *why give when you receive nothing back*. This point of view cannot surprise given the political framing of 'offshore fishing' as a continual monopoly struggle 'to get more fish' from a presupposed 'benevolent' State force. However, most crewmen agree that it would be better to *'draw the line in the sand'* and reach a compromise with the Revenue Commissioners to allow everyone move forward.

Do you have any social/accident insurance in case of non-ability to fish?

Yes: 7

No: 33

Percentage option: The 18% of men with some personal accident insurance were those who appear to have regulated tax situations and have stable social situations on shore.

Some indicated that personal insurance premiums are beyond their possibilities. Two respondents told of having had accidents and receiving no compensation payment whatsoever as it was *'their own fault'*.

Do you have a life insurance policy?

Yes: 22

No: 18

Percentage optic: Over 50% of the sample have some life insurance policy and it is no surprise to learn that 80% have dependent children. Insurance policies are often cashed in moments of difficulty. A number of men indicated that they were not sure that these policies might have value if they were to lose their life working at sea. One respondent put this dilemma in these terms: *'A man was drowned last year from a neighbouring port. His wife got nothing. If he had come back alive with a limb missing they might have got compensation. But because he was dead...he can't work when he is dead. And that was why they got nothing. Each one of those deckhands including myself is in the same situation. If I die off a fishing vessel tomorrow then my wife gets nothing'*.

Would you say what the average annual income of Irish crewmen to be:

Under £15,000: 0

£15,000-£18,000: 23

£18,500-£20,000: 15

£20,500-£23,000: 2

Percentage optic: The first cohort indicating £15,000-£18,000 was clearly linked to family ties with boats while the second had links to commercial fishing and a profile of skippering, (i.e. receiving a share and a half) during their career. These figures are probably under-stated with a reasonable annual income expectation on the larger 24+ metre beamers being over £20,000.

Do you expect to own a fishing boat someday?

Yes: 29

No: 8

Don't know: 6

Percentage optic: The 20% who replied 'No' had experienced commercial skippering profiles without any initial training qualification. In many cases it was clear that respondents would never attain boat ownership but few risk articulating a reality, that while it produced them, is now at an end as a way of life. Those that have ownership expectations, in many cases, only voice the hope that institutional regulations will open a door for them, as it did for many of their kin in the past.

Do you expect to retire from active life as a fisherman?

Yes: 29

No: 8

Don't know: 3.

Percentage optic: Nearly 75% of men gave a positive viewpoint however some older men in their late forties and early fifties without ownership possibilities declared *'that as there were few younger men coming into fishing they could not see how they might be able to 'retire' from fishing'*.

Would you want your son to be a fisherman?

Yes: 8

No: 24

Don't know: 8

Percentage optic: Over 50% expressed a negative viewpoint regarding fishing as a career for their sons. However, the context of this question must be situated with regard to the present fuel costs with an average reduction in share values of between 15-25% per trip and other uncertainties not least of which is the availability of fish stocks. Those who were positive, some of whom already have sons fishing, were older men who claimed *'there will always be a living in fishing'*.

Finally would you wish to new at-sea regulations for fishing work and crewmen's representation at local port level or 'would you leave things as they are'

New at-sea regulations: 30

Leave things as they are: 7

Don't know: 3

Percentage optic: 75% of respondents gave the view that they would wish for *'something to be done'* regarding improving at-sea work conditions. It should be pointed out that there was hesitation by many of the younger respondents as to what this 'something' should be. With hindsight this question should have had a multiple-choice scenario but it had been hoped that the 'Any Other Business' comment page adjoined to the questionnaire would offer this possibility. What was learned from this experience is that there is a need to induce discussions with all actors concerning practical changes to improve working life including communication between them selves at sea. Some of the opinions repeated by the younger men about those changes are listed here:

- (i) **Safety:** there are very different crew practices in this regard. The use of thermal suits, life jackets and safety lines is obligatory on only three of the vessels. There should be *'regular safety checks in the port'* and a *'general effort to change everyone's attitude to safety'*. *'Life is still very cheap at sea'* was a phrase repeated during the collection of opinion.
- (ii) **Conservation:** Younger men are more aware of fish stock conservation needs but regret that they have no say whatsoever in what is happening regarding the future of CFP and national control enforcement. There is recognition that the *'scientists'* are valid in their work but that the CFP quota control is *'nothing but nonsense'* as practically it forces every fisherman to act illegally on every trip if he is to stay in fishing.
- (iii) **Time at-sea:** There is a problem regarding time and fishing effort and relations with boat owners *'a lot of whom are now not at sea themselves'* but managing from *'their armchairs at home'*. Crewmen, including skippers, feel more and more *'isolated'* from fishing decision makers and have *'difficulty in explaining their situations on shore'* to men who want them *'to stay at sea for more and more time'*.
- (iv) **Non-Representation:** There is no objectified representation of skipper non-owners and crewmen's interests at either local or national levels. Time at sea, fatigue on shore results in very little time available for men to regulate their lives and their collective futures. Apart from the more experienced crewmen who buy their *'Irish Skipper'* or *'Marine News'* when home, there is little communication outside the isolation of the boat's galley effecting social issues. *'Nobody ever*

cared about the deckie, not even himself was a phrase that found resonance with many respondents.

- (v) **Legitimacy:** The most recurrent non-articulated problem among skippers and crewmen related to their social legitimacy onshore regarding house buying, bank credit and general social skills. *'I can't put it into words'; 'I'm not very good with words'; 'we are always at the bottom of the pile'* were indicators linked to a perception of fishermen of their selves as being 'illegitimate' actors in their own onshore lives. Legitimation is a problem of common belief in fishing as an economic system to provide an honest living. For many of these men the only safe place for their anxieties and troubles is on the deck or the wheelhouse of 35-year old second hand boats, as far away as possible from the land bound universe of others.

The context of 'legitimacy' of lateral fishing group relations across the European CFP field requires probing when analysing a local port, such as Kilmore Quay, as a generic unit of the national fishing industry. The general and detailed profiles given here reflect a shifting offshore fisher identity as object of change in the way working lives have been reorganised to increase productivity over the last ten years. It is a change that has remained localised rather than the object of a national framing of the fishing field, increasingly monopolised by accumulating tonnage ownership. The difficulty of objectifying structural changes in the fishing field and their effects on local attitudes and behaviour is given resonance in the following phrase recorded in an interview with a 55 year old retired skipper-owner from one of the Quay's core families. *'There is a funny thing I noticed over my life in fishing. Change sort of creeps up on you. You don't notice it until one day you look out on the harbour and realise that what you see are a new set of boats and a new set of men. It seems to happen slowly without people noticing it. Then all of a sudden it's a new game'*.

This reflexive point of view is relevant to understand the social forces at work but which are almost imperceptible when placed in relation to the following phrase used by a dominant agent of commercial change of the Kilmore Quay fishing network.

'There is no change in fishing as fishing has always been the same'.

Behind the semantic validity of this view is the reality of new technology, the entry of foreign risk capital into vessel equity, faster market information, higher safety risks with longer time at sea and a decoupling of ties by a commercial context almost trebling fishing effort in less than a decade. What cannot be seen from inside the eye of this social storm bringing change is spoken about in mechanical terms of a simple logic: *fishing has always been simple: it is all about catching the fish*.

2.7. Objectifying different standpoints

25 recorded and transcribed interviews were carried out for this study. Some interviews were carried out before the two-month period of August-September 2000. Extracts given below of some of the key interviews highlighting individual standpoints to objectify the realities engendered by change and efforts by fishermen to seek legitimacy for their uncertain situations. Each extract is framed with a general but anonymous profile of the interviewee. Section 4 gives the wives' and partners' of fishermen points of view as well as an outline of the on shore life of offshore fishermen. Each extract carries a title that reflects the interviewee's recognised position and weight inside the local network space. These extracts are presented in the context of allowing the interested reader a critical assessment of the interpretations and syntheses given in this study.

N.B. It should be recalled that the object of the study is a sociological study of offshore fishing from the Kilmore Quay harbour. It is intrinsic with its own to marine topography and historical dispositions and only by comparing differences with other harbour locales can a wider representation of Irish offshore fishing be given with some empirical validation.

Tax, Social Welfare and Fishing

According to one interviewee:

"The fishermen in the West have pushed forward the reform of the tax and social welfare situations is they are tied up for much longer than our lads here in the South-East. Guys were getting paid cash in hand and everyone was happy. There was no great move by the Revenue Commissioners (RC) except recently to find out who was fishing on what boats. The fishermen themselves were happy as they didn't see the need for anything from the State. So they were not worried about giving them anything. But what has driven fishermen now to become 'legitimate', in inverted commas, is the ...well... maturity plus the fact that they are being asked to provide for their own families and as such they are looking at property. They are looking to buy houses. Banks need to be shown evidence that they are capable of earning £30,000 per year. So it's that situation that is pushed some of the twenty and thirty year old fishermen to legitimise themselves.

"Some lads are operating a PAYE and PRSI system for their crewmen. It is a matter of choice but then again if the RC ever come in and say 'look why is this guy being treated as self-employed and this one as an employee' we have to ask the lads when they come on board what they want as a system. If they are to be self-employed then there is supposed to be a contract between the owner and the deckhand. This does not happen in practice and there has not been a trial case by the RC to test this. Most fellows want to legitimise their situation but because they have not kept records somebody has to draw a line in the sand and say from now on you are registered'. Like with the best will these guys don't save and they have not a clue about finances. A lot of them cash their cheques in the shop. That's about the height of their financial experience.

"We are well... it is a local banking system. It suits them in as much as they do not have to come face to face with financial institutions. They can change their cheques, count their cash and live their lives in almost obscurity down here, without ever having to get involved in the responsibility of having a bank account and running it. A lot of fellows who own boats now down here started like that. But they had to bite the bullet and become legitimate to negotiate with the bank.

Can you give the general pattern of those that did come forward to legitimise themselves in the last ten years?

"I would say that since I came down here in the early nineties there were about a dozen who should have come through the system. But they did not and there would not have been the need for a big organisation like the O'Flahertys had some of those guys now working for them come through the system. I think it is a question of mentality. I think that there was nobody there for them and there probably still is nobody. These guys have a fear of making contact with BIM. Nobody has ever told them where they should go. I have seen situations here where a boat was being sold for forty thousand pounds and going out of the village. I said to this guy: 'why really do you not buy this boat'. 'Oh!', he said, 'I'd get no backing here'. And I said 'how do you know?' We put a business plan together and it worked. Others have come to me, we have put the plan together but they have not taken that step forward.

Why do you think these guys don't take that step forward?

"It's a lack of education. That is the one and simple thing. It is a lack of education and this ability or non-ability to get involved. Look, they are all afraid to talk to an accountant. They talk to me because I can have a pint with them and I'm not going to charge them a hundred pounds an hour. Some of them are paying huge money to good and reputable accountants in Wexford and Dublin. But this is also putting people off. There is nothing like I would call an enterprise centre for fishermen where they can go and get involved. The Co-op might have been the thing thirty years ago but they were too inward looking. The processing entrepreneurs like the are a different breed...but I think also this village suffers, as does all the country from begrudgery...

"My own view is that if they don't do something to normalise the situation then we are back in the black economy. We are, I suppose in it but the quality of the people are at stake. I think if there was a line in the sand that you would get the vast majority of lads in. The problem is the owners' 12.2% PRSI contribution. They don't want to pay that which every other employer in the country does. The reason is simple: it is 12.2% that they never had to pay before. I think though that they can come to some arrangements and particularly where a fellow has one trip on one trip off where he can plan a social life. In the end of the day if there comes a month of storms he can go and sign on and receive payment. I don't think they would have any problem with that...

"The processing sector has now grown quite apart from the catching sector and it treats itself as a separate sector because it has different parameters and rules. As far as the catching sector is concerned I don't see young guys pushing forward to get their own boats. They have pushed forward in the West but I don't think it was considered that important to the fishermen here. I think it is now up to the fishermen themselves and the boat owners. Before they had a stock of men, they could go up to the pub and get three men. But now they are competing among themselves for good crew and you have a scallop organisation and a lobster organisation but no group pulling all together. You see you might have the situation here where a guy might want to go fishing. He might be happy going lobster fishing. But all he sees is that he has to spend five or six days on a beamer catching scallops. There is no school if you like. There is nobody pushing an educational system whereby they can identify a good fisherman or entrepreneur coming through. I'd say to you that it is now separate fishing from processing. It requires local boat owners to form a local organisation and they should do this because they should realise that they are running out of personnel fast. They are the ones who must bring the situation under control and provide training and education to the guys that are coming down to their boats'...

Do you think that there is a sense of autonomy around the port of Kilmore?

"There is but it is losing it fast. No, well this maybe has nothing to do with this interview but there is an outside culture which is persuasive in terms of drugs. The guys who are fishing as deckhands or at least the guys I know are fishing only to provide money to go on a bender and drugs. It's catch the fish, drugs; catch the fish, drugs. It is only a handful that are holding on but they don't have the education to go ahead. I don't know the level of education but there are some there that don't know any different which is why they go from deckhands to lumping fish boxes around the floors of processing plants. The couple of guys that do get on well have a little more education or *schmütz* or something. But there is a core there that just won't do anything as long as they have a level of income to provide them with the binge every eight days. There is now a sub-culture inside this village. It is a 'them' and 'us' situation. They have no interest in tradition. Fishing has become a means to getting money but they have no interests in fishing but because they know no different they will stick at it to get the money. Fishing is getting a bad name where it should have been getting education and training to bring the good men through it

into a team on new boats. Because in the end it is about the values of the people and I have to say this having come down here first over 45 years ago and now living here people are now coming to Kilmore Quay for the wrong reasons. They built a new harbour and marina here but nobody has given any thought to what happens when the influx arrives or the future of this fishing village as a town and all that goes with it."

The local boat owner, communication and fishing morale

The following interview was not recorded directly but notes were taken as it lasted over two hours and took place at sea. The interview can be divided into two contexts: the problem of local '*representation*' and the problem of '*communication*'.

"We have moved from the Ard Ailbhe, a wooden trawler to the St. Josse a steel hulled, 576 kW twin rigger from France during my life time. The Ard Ailbhe is the last of the first boats. None of the owners' sons wanted to have her so she lies now rotting away as a sign of what has happened over the last thirty five years or so in Kilmore Quay. Maybe some of the Arklow lads will take her back up to fish white fish. The Co-operative worked well at the beginning because men were committed to selling their fish through the auction floor. Men moved away in order to negotiate higher prices for themselves. They just couldn't get a good professional to manage the Co-op.

Fishermen members are always saying 'they' for the Co-op but should not that be 'we'?

"Yes, well I mean 'them' for the present set-up that is poor in my opinion. Like if you take Union Hall Fishermen's Co-op they got in a new manager by giving him the power to decide and manage the Co-op as a proper business selling its fish. You need a sort of Hitler here to get that sort of reaction. There is only a future for the Co-op would be if the white fish sector increased, then I'd have no problem going back. Scallops are different and we trade out catch directly with the factories.

"There was a high degree of togetherness to lobby for the redevelopment of the harbour. Even though it was *ad hoc* everybody pulled together to lobby politicians and with the importance of two Ministers from Wexford at the time we got the funding. I think the present harbour set-up is good and that for £20 berthing charges per week I get what I need. But I'm not sure about the future as even though there is a harbour committee, it is not organised on any sure-footing.

"Like it's *ad hoc* and there are only three members with one of the O'Flahertys that is difficult because of their size now. They're a company. Like I am not saying anything against them or him, because he is very good in what he says but it's a problem of never being sure about what's behind anything he might propose. It's about the balance of representation I suppose and not having suspicions. Such suspicions are only normal and you can't blame men for having them. So things are not clear about representing the fleet's interests as they stand, particularly with Wexford County Council. Like I think it a good thing that they are involved but I don't know how we can proceed without having a proper organised committee to represent our interests...

What are your views regarding the present crewmen's situation?

I think that we are going back to the middle-ages, to slavery. As far as I am concerned the non-regulation of men at sea, their tax problems and social insurance are nothing short of a disgrace. Everyone is to blame and I think the government should act now to resolve this problem once and for all. The high price of oil has forced men to sea for longer and

longer hours. As far as the share system is concerned it just is not a self-employment situation and any fool can see that. The point is that it can be argued anywhere that it is not except in an Irish court of law. But if there is to be change in this the crewmen have to come a bit of the way themselves. Jumping ship is the problem because they can turn on you for anything and just leave you in the lurch. It's happened to me and I know the bad feelings that can generate in the harbour. There should be some form of formal notice and that would help move things forward...

"I don't know whether I can explain something the right way about what I feel about Irish fishermen. I think that there has always been something missing as far as they are concerned. There is no sense of rank on board a fishing boat or even a sense of authority regarding the skipper. I don't know maybe if fishermen had some kind of uniform with markings of rank or something to give them a position as sea-men.

Do you think that fishermen are regarded as second-class citizens at sea?

"Yes, I do and I know this from experience. I think that there is a need for more thinking about the psychological side of fishing. There is a need for better authority and a hierarchy. There is no hierarchy in fishing here and that's a real problem when it comes to morale...

"Another problem I think needs to be sorted is about information. We just don't get information about what's going on at national and European levels. It's all hear-say and look, I'm supposed to have a VMS system put in. I have one in the boat but nobody in the Department of the Marine can tell me for sure whether it's the right one or the wrong one. Fishermen are pretty good at telling themselves what's going on. I get on well with the Arklow lads but as far as keeping us informed of what is happening at the top there is no way we can have the right sort of information when we want it unless you have a contact high up. I don't and I think that is not right. My son, who does not want to be a fisherman and is in university could come home last week and tell me what the price of scallops was on the Dutch market. He used the Internet. I can't and think that if we had some training to help us use things like that we'd know a hell of a lot more about what's going on.

"It's still all about knowing someone at the top and this is pushing men like myself further and further onto the sidelines. Why I ask myself with all this computer technology can we not have one have a single information unit giving us all equal access to information regarding fishing? There are always fishing mists being pushed out to darken the future. Why not use the Harbour Authority to install European fish market information that could be diffused every day. I think that there should be a new position created to manage all this new information technology at port level, a sort of fishing port manager who would be trained in technology and markets.

"I think that all everyone ever talks about is policing the seas, looking for Irish fishermen breaking the rules. Very little has been done at local levels to provide us with the information to keep us ahead and improving. It's all somewhere 'up there' but very few of us ever see anyone down here, in the harbour and on our boats to inform us of what's happening.

"If I was to sum up I think to improve fishing we must settle the share-fishing thing that is a joke, organise better information for everybody at port level and do something about discipline on board boats. When it comes down to it, this reflects us fishermen ourselves and I mean by that our sloppy discipline, no ranking order on deck and no pride and vision for the future".

The Younger Skippers

The following interviewee has made his mind up about his career in commercial fishing: *"I'm in it for the long hand. At least I have something to build upon unlike many of my contemporaries who missed their chances with bivalve licences"*.

Do you think there is much of a difference between you and your father's fishing generation?

"I would approach the game in a different way than the older generation. Today, fishing is a much harder game. The young skippers like myself know when they are going out that the fish are not there. We know therefore that fishing demands a lot more effort, more time at sea and more planning. Today fishing is 75% of your life...

"More bureaucracy is the last thing that we need. There is big change taking place. I see fish stocks going into big decline and only those with the will power and the tenacity to hang in there will survive. Hopefully there will be benefits to reap that are right across the boards with a possible return to full fish stocks and stable fuel prices. There is hope for us smaller boats if controls are applied to push the bigger boats back across the 12-mile limit.

"There is a hidden agenda in Irish fishing. It's to phase it out entirely. As far as the political side of fishing is concerned the will is not strong to fight and keep Irish fishing strong. The Kilmore Co-operative was a good idea to give fishermen control over their future. A lot of boats have left it. I think it is due to a lack of professional management. You can go further with the Co-op and draw it into the social scene of fishermen's lives. It should provide more financial services to the fishermen. Look at the O'Flaherty set up. It's a company and their trip on/trip off system has changed boats. We don't do a trip on trip off because we can't get enough good crewmen.

What does Kilmore Quay port mean to you?

"It's home. It is a place that I would like to see developed. The port needs more development. There are plans to enlarge the port you know. When the new harbour was opened in 1997 I think fishermen were glad to get something done.

"The fleet increased its capacity rapidly. It strengthened our morale and it had a knock-on effect. The Celtic Tiger economy should be able to offer a possibility for the future because if the boats move to another port it will have a serious effect on everyone around. Fishing is my livelihood, it's that of my family's and for the other young men of this community it's their life-blood. The younger generation skippers I think I could count on one hand but there are more young lads like us to try and keep in the game. We distinguish ourselves from the O'Flahertys' commercial enterprise. They have refined it into a business thing. Fishing for them is a way of making money but to us lads it is a way of life. The O'Flahertys have changed the game big time. They have accumulated thousands of tonnes now. They took everything they could while younger men could not get into the game. It is not fair. Look I know they had the right to do that and I say honestly that I would do the same because that is the way the game is. I know that if I had the right to exercise a right on tonnage I would do it. The O'Flahertys are successful men and fair dues to them but the open market tonnage system allowed them basically to step over everybody else and take it.

"I was one of the last to be issued with a scallop or specific aquaculture licence. I jumped at it. But there were a lot of guys around here who missed their chance and they regret it bitterly now. I find it sad that they can't do what their fathers did. They know it only too well now. What they are doing is a big lump of shit, going to sea for ten days and

knowing that they will never get a boat of their own. I am part of the scallop association but it tends to be very individualistic. We don't have proper producer group structure. There has to be a structure there if it is going to stay in business and be productive. The problem is that these things tend quickly to become talking shops and men just drift back to their old ways."

The next interviewee is a young man, who has just completed his Skipper's Class II ticket at the National Fisheries Training Centre in Greencastle. He is now skippering an older beam trawler rigged for scalloping. The recorded interview was held in the presence of one of his crew, something that just would not happen with older skippers.

"I think for anybody going out fishing it should be obligatory that they do their deckhand ticket. If I had a choice now, and I started fishing four years ago, I would have done my deckie ticket first. I think there should be a 6 months or one year apprenticeship before doing it. He can then learn more about what he is doing and about proper safety procedure. When anyone starts they just don't know the swing of things...

"Greencastle gave me a great vote of confidence to go back to sea. I enjoy being at sea much more. They way up there is they teach you about what you are. It's a bit like being Christopher Columbus and going over the edge of the world. You just don't know about all that nautical stuff, charts, positions, time and leeway. I'll go back and get my orals, that's for sure. They teach you on a blackboard and if I do have a criticism it is that you do not get to take a boat out to sea during the three months. The course is basically all technical.

Was there any course given on managing people or did you discuss problems linked to tensions with crews and social life and finances on shore?

"No there was nothing like that. Although I know that fishing is not a sociable job. Like you can't play sport like football or hurling. It's kind of a job that you end up doing, you won't get many doing it that is for sure. I was always told to stay away from fishing at home from my father and the others. But I do believe there is a future. I have the knowledge but not the experience. I think that we the next generation of fishermen are very different.

"Yes I would have no problems going to other ports if I thought I would do better there. I'm not married however I fell in love in Greencastle! I have a girlfriend from there and she comes from a fishing background. She knows the score. Like the women are not too bad about us young fishermen but it is the parents. They are always telling their daughters: 'look he is going to be away, he'll drink all his money and all that bullshit. Like land is a strange place sometimes. Shore life just becomes secondary. Everything has to be done in a mad rush.

"I think fishing does get to you yea. You can't stop thinking sometimes both at sea and on shore. I know of men that just walked away from it. I think that there should be some time regime brought into place and perhaps something to stop week-end fishing. There must be an organised break from it or you'd go mad".

Skipper non-owner and deckhand colleague

The next interviewee (**Fisherman A**) completed his leaving certificate and spent some time working in the catering business before being attracted to fishing. *"I saw these guys who I had*

been at school with and wads of money in their hand every week. I was getting £80 per week at that time and worked Saturdays and Sundays. So I left and went fishing. If I had to go on after my leaving to college I think I would never have gone fishing". The extracts below come from a recorded interview with both himself and his crew colleague (**Fisherman B**) who was leaving the boat to go on his own boat fishing scallops. Their opposite points of view about the share fishing system is pertinent to this study. The extracts given at length here are typical of other interviews recorded with skipper non-owners.

You both have over fifty years of experience between you as crewmen could you talk about deckies' lives and problems relating to insurance and tax?

Fisherman A: Well there has always been a problem there, an ongoing problem. But that wasn't down just to a case, like I remember when I started fishing we used pay a stamp £4.50 a week and at that time if you were out of work you could go and you could sign. It's all changed now, like all changed altogether. There's no stamp now. It's up to most of the lads whether they pay or not. Actually, they wouldn't like if it was up to a fellow to look after his own. I'd say they couldn't if it was up to the fellow; At the end of the day, right, a lot says that you have to pay your stamps to draw when you come to 66 years of age.

Fisherman B: But they are going to do away with that. It's all going to be privatised anyway so it will be up to each individual to have his own insurance. That's my opinion on it anyway.

Fisherman A: I wouldn't agree with that at all.

Fisherman B: Would you not?

Fisherman A: No. I think it should go back to what it was before. Because I thought it was a better system.

Fisherman B: Yea, it was a better system all right because you hadn't much control over it. It was done for you and that was that. Do you know what I mean, you had your pay done for you.

Fisherman A: Like in the fishing industry you are not getting a regular wage and it's very hard to put by for your tax bill at the end of the year. Plus your P.R.S.I. at £500 or whatever it is on top of that. I thought anyway that it suited the owners this time as they had not to do so much book work or anything like that. That's why the owners didn't bother much to change over. It suited them but it doesn't suit the crew. There is very little people that it does. There are so many court cases coming up now about people and crew being brought to court for not paying tax because they are not able to put the money aside

But Fisherman B does not agree with your view, why?

Fisherman B: You see I have another business here and it would not suit me like right now. But it would have suited me that way before. I agree though with Fisherman A because it suits him. But it does not suit me like, as you asked me for my personal opinion. It wouldn't suit me now. It suits the other lads I fish with though.

So it depends on the individual's situation then?

Fisherman B and Fisherman A: Oh yes, yes.

Are you then experiencing big changes in your work since you began twenty years ago?

Fisherman A: Ah a lot of changes yea. But there is one thing that has never changed and that crews never have any representation anyway in Ireland. Anything that was ever done was for the owners' of the boats. It was never for a skipper or a crewman. You never heard tell of that. I'm fishing thirty years and there was never ever a meeting called for to discuss crewmen's problems or to see if they had any point of grievance. BIM were never interested in the crewman. They are all squealing now but they have left it too late.

Could you talk about your relationship with boat owners over the years?

Fisherman B: Things have not changed so much over the years in that respect because as far as we are concerned you are always working for someone else no matter what the laws says. We are still working for GT. I can't say to GT (look I won't bother going to sea this time). You'd be on the pier! No matter what law is changed that will never change.

Fisherman A: Well, we are not self-employed by no means. It suits the situation maybe to say we are self-employed. But we'll never be self-employed. When you are told to get into a boat you have to go. If you don't go then you are sacked. Although my situation is changing now it was always that way for thirty years.

You are a skipper non-owner without official recognition of your qualifications does that frustrate you?

Fisherman A: No it wouldn't bother me at all really. Things have been...like once you got a skipper's job it does not matter who recognises it. All that matters is that you get a bit more money than the lads on the deck.

Fisherman B:: You do your time, you get your money.

Fisherman A: At the end of the day that is all that matters. But things haven't changed there. Like I'm fifteen years fishing and this is my third boat for roughly five years. Nothing has changed much except for this law they brought out being self-employed. The price of fish has not gone up in fifteen years. Come Christmas time there is a bit of boom, but that's all.

Fisherman B: No, prices were lower last week than they were ten years ago. That's the biggest grievance. I know myself that if you compare invoices from last week and fifteen years ago, I think they would have got more then than now.

The fact then that you are employed but considered self-employed is frustrating?

Fisherman A: Yes, that would frustrate me because the way I look at it I get paid for what I do and I don't need any thanks or to say thank you master give me my money. I work for wages and that's the way it is.

Fisherman B: You do it for money. That's the way it is.

Fisherman A: I don't need sympathy for what I do. What I do I do for myself if I want.

Fisherman B:: You are only out there just for your own family and nobody else.

Fisherman A: Yes your own family and that's it. The only thanks that is needed is the envelope. That's all I need anyway as I'm talking personal like now.

On the aspect of social insurance what is your opinion of the situation?

Fisherman B:: It's not acceptable to 90% of the deckhands. I would think that but what the other ten percent think I don't know. Me personally it does not effect me. I'm one of the ten percent now because of my business here. Saying that now I just sooner have it that way as it is now with the business like.

Fisherman A: No, I'd prefer the old system. But the problem that arises now is the people up in court for owing tax. In 1986 or 1984 when it changed over, we were told by Joe Maddock secretary of the IFO. Well, we were told to do nothing about it for the moment because it's not cleared up. Specifically it was not cleared up and that we were not to go and pay our own tax. The owners were told not to take any either. Therefore two years went by and people hadn't paid any tax and then were told that they had to pay the tax. Like at that stage people were in a bad way like. So I just had to go in and...

Fisherman B: You just hadn't got the money to pay it.

What are your opinion about the future of today's deckies?

Fisherman A: I think that the fishing industry is on a decline where crew members are concerned as for one thing there is no one going into it.

Fisherman B: There are two boats below tied up because they can't get crews.

Fisherman A: That all reflects on it because for starters the money ain't there no more that was there. The owners are looking for to get more out of it, more percentages out of it.

Fisherman B: More and more. Look my young lad here is working for Central Windows, goes to work at eight in the morning, finishes at half four and takes home between £280- £300 a week. Everything is paid for, tax, insurance and pension. And it's very hard to get young lads to walk into a boat and say 'right get in there and you have to look after your own tax and all'.

Fisherman A: Yea and that we are going for eight to ten days as well.

Fisherman B: You have no holiday pay. I reckon myself that in ten years down the line the average age of crews in Irish fishing will be fifty!

Fisherman A: If I could get a job ashore for £300-£350 a week I would not be fishing. No way would I fish. But you see there is no job ashore unless you have qualifications. Because a lot of people when they get into fishing they, especially like in the local community, young people are seeing what people of their own age are making and they are attracted to it because its money. But they don't think about the other consequences. They are not going through school like or not further than secondary level. And secondary level is no good now anyway. Like I passed my Leaving Cert. but where would that get you now? What job would that get you now, it would get you nothing.

Would you agree there has been a 50% percent increase in productivity from you guys at sea to earn the same money over the last five years.

Fisherman B: Yea, at least I'd think.

Fisherman A: Yea, at least that more I'd say no problem.

Yet you feel that there is no future for this game

Fisherman B: and Fisherman A: No, that's right.

Do you have a strong feeling of being Irish fishermen when you are out on the sea?

Fisherman A: It don't really matter really. The Spanish, sure people give out about the Spanish but sure they're out off the West coast and you are brave enough to go out and join them out sure you can go out there. You can have that like.

Fisherman B: OK you have to make the money for your family I think if it came to the situation that you are spending more time at sea than you do at home, then that's enough. Because what's life all about anyway?

Fisherman A: Exactly. Like your time off is OK if everything going to plan you could have a week at home. Because of that extra week off you have a hell of a lot more expenses on the boat. Like if you could work Monday to Friday you might be far better off with just the five crew members. Whereas now we have to have seven. That's an extra six shares. So for those boats to be feasible then you have to do more than Monday to Friday. It's a catch-22 situation.

Fisherman B: You are looking at it from a trip to trip basis. That's all you can do.

There are differences between you both?

Fisherman A: Only on a point of the tax system.

Fisherman B: It wouldn't suit me now to change it. It would have suited me ten years ago, but not now. I feel that the fisherman should feel more secure in his job.

*

Fisherman A: But how do we get that, should the State be more involved in securing this?

Fisherman B: Jasus the track record of the State is not good like. Not at all. For starters you have the problem of taxes. No fisherman is going to go out and do seven days at sea

and then the State says that we are going to take two days off that for ourselves. That's not going to happen.

Fisherman A: And another thing for a crewman to go off the deck to buy a boat it's nearly impossible. They can't get off the deck. There was more chance back in the sixties. My father bought a boat then for about £40,000 with a grant of £23,000 while putting his bit of land and a house on the line. I was making more money way back then than I am now. I could take in £500 a week on the herrings at that time. And that was something that time and that begs the question what did you do with it you know! No, I was making more money that time.

But the fact that crewmen were not represented officially did that bother you then and today?

Fisherman B: It always bothered me.

Fisherman A: It bothers me because the crewman or the deckhand can't go any further; OK if you had ten thousand in your bank account you could go buy yourself a boat but the only thing you can do now is go and fish scallops. The ordinary Joe Soap cannot go ahead and get whitefish tonnage at £4000 a ton. So the fishing industry as it is will not go any further.

(Fisherman B leaves the room to take a telephone call to go back to sea)

Could you talk about your skippering experience?

Fisherman A: What you have to do when you go looking for a job as a skipper, I ended up getting a skipper's job because I was looking at the engineering job. Someone was leaving and I was asked would I be interested and I said I would. I'd chance it and here I am five years later. But hhhmm responsibility of people on board and the boat does not come into it where I am concerned. I think if you had that kind of thing over your head and you were worrying about it then you'd end up in a mental home for starters.

But the reality is that you are a skipper with responsibility for four men at sea. What do you see yourself as?

Fisherman A: Ah yea, yes responsible. But I'm just the skipper. I'm the generation that cannot go any further. I can't buy a scallop boat like Fisherman B.

But why should you want to go further if you have a good position and wage?

Fisherman A: Well you see some people wouldn't, you see. It's everybody's aim to have their own boat if you felt secure enough to chance it. That's the big issue. Now to go and buy your own boat. Because if they go borrow money for an industry that depends a lot on weather, not so much what we are doing at the moment because with scallop fishing after four, six or seven men you may forget about it. So you say to yourself how am I going to get out? Am I able to pay for it? Well, the boat will still be paid for as it will be financial viable. It would be near more a risk to go fishing a scallop boat than to go buy one actually. It would be more of a risk to go skippering a scallop boat than to go buy one.

But you may be much better off in the long run with where you are now?

Fisherman A: Oh yeah, if you are happy enough with the way things are going. I'm sure every one gets restless when you see someone else doing better and you think it's going to last. Then you would be interested going beaming but it's quite hard to leave FT. Because he has gone past the risk factor and you see if something goes bang, he can just sell it off and he is rich. At the end of the day he owns the boat and he will do what he likes with it. If we don't like the system, as the fellow says, you can go somewhere else. You know we like the system at the moment but it's getting too hard to get fish. For the last year the

amount of travel we have to do to actually get good trips up is a lot of pressure. If the fish are not there the simple fact is that the system can't work... Going back to the old system would take a lot of the pressure off you as you don't have to worry about the tax end of things and PRSI end of things.

But it will not go back to that as no way will the owners change the way the system is. And if they don't want to change it then who else is going to change it. The ordinary crewman has no say in the industry. The owners have to do a lot of fighting a lot of things changed from their point of view. Anything they want changed they go through Ministers and all, sure like, for arguments sake, the ordinary persons would not be able to talk to the likes of those people, like you know. Put their idea to them. Like I said things should be changed in the way tonnages should be but they can't be because the likes of FT who has paid so much money for them. They'd be at a loss if that changed. Fishing industry is on a down and as far as young people coming into is concerned it's going to get worse.

Does that bother you?

Fisherman A: Yes because there is none listening to you and I don't know the industry is not going anywhere for the ordinary crewman who will never have a say. I don't see how that could change.

Is there a difference between you and some of the skipper-owners in the Quay?

Fisherman A: The only difference that there is between one skipper and another is the amount of experience he has. It does not matter what qualifications he has. I am a skipper of a boat but I have not got no skipper's ticket. It does not matter to me in the least as I do the job as good as anyone else in the rest of the boats. I'd never say better but as good. I don't need no piece of paper to tell me I am able to do that. No there are certain aspects of it like for argument's sake the navigation end of things. I would like to get deeper into that for my own benefit. But as regards the rest of it, it would not be of any real benefit to me. I make the decisions out there. Once you leave the pier it's up to you where you must go. You have to have the luck..fifty percent of it is luck. Like where do you go when you get to the Hook, do you go East, West or South? And that's what it boils down as experience at sea. I grant it that people say you should have this and that, a ticket, which is probably right, for insurance purposes. But it does not bother me as I can still get that boat in and out of any harbour that she is capable without any ticket.

Would you accept a test that would confirm and grant you a ticket to recognise that experience?

Fisherman A: Oh yea. For someone to come on the boat and test me out going into a harbour. I don't know whether I'd pass it but it wouldn't bother me. But there would be no one to come out on the boat to tell me what I'm doing right and what I'm doing wrong. As everything I do on the boat like you either do it right or you don't do it right. There is no in-between. So, no fellow from an office can come out onto the boat and tell me what I'm doing there is wrong. You could get a captain come out to you and tell you about going up a river or something like that about different leading lights and tides... They could catch you that way, that way they could. On the practical end of things they could not catch me on nothing. I'd be 100% confident on that.

Would you like to see some way to confirm such recognition and experience?

Fisherman A: But nobody would get into the wheelhouse unless they people who own the boats knew they had that experience. You do get people who are given the job even though he has the years of experience but you know yourself you won't be able for it. The job itself you know when you get out there. It's getting the boat in and out of the harbour when the weather is bad. That's the problem. You need time at sea for that especially with

beaming as you could lose a boat in five minutes if you got caught in a wreck or something. No ticket will do that for you.

So to sum up there is no going back to the pre-McLaughlin system.

Fisherman A: No. Who is going to listen to deckhands? If the owners don't change it then who will? I am sure that there is someone watching this like. Why is there so many up in court on this?

But regarding rights such as social security are you in some way outside the common ways of most working people in Ireland?

Fisherman A: Yea we are. We are outside that bracket. But whose going to bring us back to order? If crewmembers start shouting about that the owners are the first to say that, 'well if you are not happy with the situation then you can go somewhere else'. That's what will happen."

The Crewmen, status and safety

Shorter extracts of interviews and written submissions by crewmen are given below.

"I enjoy fishing. It's been my life and I would not be satisfied doing anything else. But there are things that are not right and particularly when local politicians and others go on about improving fishing and more time at sea. They do not know the difference between working on big boats and on the smaller ones like I am on.

"Two years ago I slipped and badly turned on my ankle. It was my fault I accept and I was out from fishing for five months in plaster. My employer did not want to know. He didn't give a penny during that time. I had to use up all my savings to keep the house going during that period. I am with him for ten years and I came back because I like the guy. The thing is, I don't know, but because of this self-employed thing they think that they can do what they like. It's an attitude above everything else. Like I saw it myself over the years people getting away with the dole payments and the police, everyone turning a blind eye. That had to be changed I agree. But now I think no one gives a damn about fishing. That includes my own son who quit a boat last week without as much as 24 hours notice. That could never be on as far as I am concerned".

Note: This interview was given on board the man's vessel. Interestingly a discussion followed with the rest of the crew and the owner joined in. It was friendly, open and frank. The owner declared that '*something must be done to provide insurance for crewmen and safety training*'. Everyone agreed and went back to their gear.

"The age of our fleet means constant breakdowns. The many problems we have getting our fair share. It was once only fuel, food, ice that were taken out of our expenses. Now they add insurance, filters, harbour dues, safety equipment, boat-cars, (*the cost of getting a taxi to the boat a.n.*) lubeoil etc., etc.,

Time apart from our families causes tension. You can leave home in love and return home almost a stranger.

Shore workers should be employed to relieve some of the strain and allow more time off. It would also create work for fishermen who have had their fill of the sea, or who have simply got too old for deck work. Good luck"

Note: in U.K. ports, such as Fleetwood, men employed to land and clean up boats are known as 'lumpers'.

The next interviewee said. *'At a rough estimate I've drunk a quarter of a million pounds and don't remember a fiver's worth'*. He has stopped drinking now and is putting his life back together.

I've fished all over but there is what I call the Irish mentality which is 'we do things this way' and that's it. We are going to bring you around to our thinking. There is so much arrogance around in Irish fishing as against what I experienced elsewhere. They'll all say sure you can go right back there then. But this is my country and I'm damned if they will beat me down all the time...

"Deckies don't understand that everyone is responsible for safety. They have never had the time to learn anything. They are naïve. I know a man who had two fingers ripped off. This was in Newlyn and not Ireland. He went to the fishing company and they told him that he was entitled to nothing. They told him: It was your fault. So he went away because he did not think he was entitled to anything. What they told him in the office was about as far as he could see because he was blinkered. We are all blinkered. It's owners' bluff. When I was in the port of F. (a port in southern Ireland) I saw this ad in the paper looking for people interested in forming a co-operative for deckhands around the country. I went to them and stood up for my claim and everyone told me that you would get nothing out of them. But my frame of mind has changed since I was drinking. I went to court. It was that money that they gave me that allowed me the possibility to do my ticket. 'Description of the accident' and then 'settlement'. Insurance is about money.

"I know fishermen who are genuine. There are a certain number of people who are in the same frame of mind but not only for the actual job but for the ethics and morals of the whole way of life. I don't talk to most deckies like this. I would be arguing all the time with guys who through no fault of their own have insular mentalities."

The next interviewee is nineteen years of age.

"I've been fishing now for nearly two years since that. I stayed on the first scallop boat for four months. I move around the boats. We go out scallop fishing for four sometimes five days. Monday until Friday. I was getting about £125 per trip last year. Sometimes I got £200. It's great. You were working with your mates and always messing about. The way fishing is like I know how to fish now so I can go anywhere in the world and I know that myself I have got experience at fishing. So I can go and make a lot of money if I ever want to go to College.

What would you like to do at College?

I'd like to do a sound engineering course in Dublin. It costs about £2,500. I love the music. I'd like to take that decision and fishing might help me to do it. I suppose that well I don't know whether I am a fisherman or not. There is me mate J. and others who have it

in their blood. J has been fishing since he was fourteen. I don't really come from a fishing family so I don't have the 'fishing disease' as they call it (*laughter*).

Were you not afraid when you went to sea first?

Not really because I know I am a good swimmer. I had a few close calls. I remember fishing last summer. It was a roasting hot day. I had just me jammies on (overalls) and my shorts underneath and my wellies. The next thing I knew I was in the water. There is a rope that goes up and down and the hook caught me at the other end of the boat. I fell into the water and was holding onto the rope. My wellies filled up with water and dragged me down. The next thing I knew I was back on the deck. The lads managed to pull me in.

What did the lads say?

Ah they were just clowning with me. Well they were not angry with me but like calling me a gom and telling me to cop onto myself. 'Trying to drown yourself, you gom ye' they said. Another time I nearly lost a foot when on shore we were landing and a rope pulled me by the leg through one of the holes in the side of the boat. This time I was wearing wellies that were too big for me. So I was able to pull my foot out before it got crushed.

Was there ever mention of fishing as a career and doing training for it when you were at school?

Not really only among the lads. The only lads who ever knew anything about fishing were the lads who dropped out of school and went down to the Quay.

Would you say that fishing attracts the lads who drop out of school?

Yea.

The lads that don't like authority at school?

I suppose it could be that. You could be right there.

I maybe wrong!

Yea, I don't know if everybody has dropped out of school to go fishing but a lot of them have.

What is the difference when you worked in a factory and when you work on a fishing boat?

Hmmm. In a factory you are told to do things. On a boat you are asked to do them. If you don't do what you are asked it could be dangerous for everyone. Or somebody else has to take the risk and you could be sacked. Other times when you can't do them like they help you out.

If you had lost your leg that time you would have had to do without your leg from your seventeenth birthday until the day you died?

It is in your own interest to take up national insurance. Like there was this woman going around selling insurance but she didn't come back. I suppose I wouldn't be scared money-wise but I would be scared not having a leg.

So you are going back next week to sea even though you have no insurance if you lose a leg?

Yes I suppose I am.

Do you want to say anything else about fishing?

No come back to me in twenty years. Tonight all the lads and myself are going to see 'The Perfect Storm'!"

Extracts from the next interview with a 43 year old crewman took place in his home just before leaving for a fourteen day trip.

"As far as the tax and insurance thing is concerned it is up to each deckhand to it individually for themselves. You see this is what I don't understand about all of this. Why can't the owner, the persons who you are working for, why can't he have you in the Irish Fishermen's Organisation? It's no skin off his nose to organise it all as he is sitting at home most of the time on land. Most of the owners now don't even go to sea. They always get the skipper to go in and get the crew so why can't they try and organise something like that for their crew.

So what in your opinion have owners become since the days you began in what you described fishing as a family and friend thing?

"It is greed now because they can see the end is coming so they have to survive too. They are like squirrels. A squirrel collects so many nuts to protect himself through the winter. That is what the owners are like now. They can see that it is coming to an end and they are driving us, the crews, to collect their nuts...

"You will always hear about the boat that does well. We had a Big Week. But ask the man when was the last time he had a Big Week before that and he might say eight or nine months ago. You don't get Big Weeks in rows. You just don't get that. You might get one Big Week but there are a hell of a lot of bad ones in between. You get to the stage that you are ringing up look at the local shops and the No Credit signs that are now up. Ring the ESB and ask then how many deckhand wives are pleading with them not to cut them off for another week. For people who are supposed to be getting a lot of money, then I don't think they would have these problems.

"Look I'm going to sea for fourteen days now. Watch this and you'll see what my wife and kids think of that.

He calls over his son who is five years of age.

Fisherman: Do you want Daddy to go on the (name of boat)

Son: No

Fisherman: Why?

Son: Nooo

He calls his other son who is seven.

Fisherman: Why do you not want Daddy to go on the (name of boat) tonight?

Second son: Because when (Name of first son) cries I cry.

Fisherman: And how long does (Name of first son) cry for?

Second son: All the time 'til you come home again.



Section 3

The Downstream Sector

3.1. Background

Commercial 'fish business' penetrated harbour catching through the fish buyer or his trawler agent who established trading links with a boat owner by getting '*his boxes on the boat*'. The buyer supplied his named boxes to the owner-skipper who in turn filled them, iced the fish and returned the boxes to the buyer's lorry. There was no written contract with cash settlement after the sale of the catch generally being made one week following landing. The identified fish boxes on board linked the catching sector with the wholesale sector based in Dublin. During the first decades of modern Irish fishing risk control was not in finding the fish but rather in getting paid for them. Gluts in the concentrated Dublin fish market often meant the rapid exiting of new entrants to the buying game. Market uncertainty mobilised skipper-owners to insure against individual losses and establish local co-operative identities distributing their own fish-boxes during the '60 and '70s. It was expected that such collective underwriting could reproduce control autonomy over the fishermen's sales to the fish buyers. This did not prove the case as fishery regulatory dynamics altered both market structures at port localities and catching profit margins at sea. However, the share fishing practice remained fungible with market prices for fish, thus incorporating downstream profit and loss fluctuations with crewmen's income returns and the overall performance of their catching unit.

The implantation of processing plants in potential catching poles during the mid-seventies did not alter the convention of fish-boxes identifying *informal* ties between buyers and boats. Boxes were marked with the corporate logo of the processor and dispersion showed who was fishing for whom inside a differentiating fishing field. A national base of 8 fishermen's co-operatives developed a network for 40 buyer agencies that embedded linkages with boats during the following decade. As volumes of whitefish became more difficult to obtain and catching efforts increased, conventional ties between fish sellers and the buyers altered. Conditions to secure diminishing supplies to reduce overall financial risks pushed artisan owner-skipper into direct alliances with the processing entrepreneurs. This reoriented allegiance from a service co-operative identity to more speculative ventures linked to fish prices. Some skipper-owners invested directly in local processing projects, while others adopted new techniques, such as beam trawling and pair fishing. The term 'dedicated' boat that lands to a single processor but which is not bound by any formal contract came into use around this time.

Managers of fish processing plants trained and motivated their work forces to European market standards during the 1980s. Selected market linkages with European countries were aligned during the 1990s as CFP quota regulation tightened the supply side of the industry. As Single Market rationalisation transformed informal conventions, the relationship between fish buyers and the Irish catching sector became an object of force. Unlike other fishing industry structures there were no statutory arbitration agencies, (such the 'bargaining agent' in New Brunswick) set in place in the Republic. Fish buyers organised themselves into specialist groups, while the catching sector remained dependent on individually managed catching units sustaining competitive advantage across BIM's export drive. 'Irish' fish is today a commodity good subject to normative financial discipline and downstream rationalisation. Buying disciplines reduced financial risk from high water line inland; while fishermen continued 'the race to fish' believing

their interests held common cause with the processing sector. In fact, the native catching sector has been 'cut adrift' from the Irish processing field which controls supply shortage by seeking within the EU and global markets for commodity product. This discontinuity between direct market prices for fish and organised agency interfaces lies at the core of share fishing's difficulties to assure income levels for crewmen.

This section outlines the underlying structures that engendered the downstream first sale of fish, processing and small service industries as they developed around Kilmore Quay. Interviews were conducted with the management of each of the processing plants and the fishermen's co-operative. The figures regarding production and employment were given by management and provide a representation of dependency between the port's fishing effort, its downstream markets and port/service infrastructures.

3.2. Local Fish Auction

The Kilmore Quay Fishermen's Co-operative

The Co-operative is managed today by a local man who has experience as a skipper-owner as well as the buying sector of the fish business. The Co-operative directors, faced with liquidation some five years ago, employed him to manage the weekly auctions back to a stable financial position. Volume supply of whitefish is low and therefore markets are limited to local buyers (50%) with 25% of the fresh fish sold bought by Dublin merchants. The remainder is sold to various national fishmongers. The Co-op's original premises are still used with the auction floor adjoining its offices and canteen. The Co-operative's fixed assets are essentially property based with 'Kilmore Fish Company' and 'Saltees Fish' renting their premises from the co-op.

Number of employees: 6 persons, 3 of who are women working in the office.

Management overview: Low volumes of whitefish remain the primary restraint for the Co-operative's auction possibilities. 'Ringing' by fish buyers (fixing prices by orchestrating the bidding process) was one of the problems of the Co-op auction. This has been faced down by allowing potential buyers to forward their price limits to the Co-operative official who bids on their behalf during the auction. Due to the low volume of trading commissions at 7.5% the Co-operative has difficulty competing against the bigger fish wholesalers. The Co-operative 'lost' its bigger-boat clients from the end of the 1980s but does have 8 local boats landing to it on a regular basis. The Co-operative's commercial identity is positioned between the fresh fish and processing markets, starved of working capital and a strategic plan to reposition its 'service' mission to members, the majority of whom are no longer catching whitefish. Core directors still see in the co-operative a '*catalysing force that goes beyond the cyclical nature of the fishing game*'. This organisation for sustaining market choice for locally landed fish depends on the present auction service remaining functional. Whereas 'loyalty' to the co-op's activity was originally an important asset, the client-membership relationship is conditioned by arbitrary alliances with outside fish buyer agencies.

Annual turnover: £2 millions. 1999-2000 the Co-operative auction disposed of some 17,000 boxes of various whitefish species: while up June of this year some 7,500 boxes have been sold that equates with the previous year's amount of 7,800 boxes sold. Depending on the supply there are three scheduled auctions per week.

3.3. Fish Processors

Sofrimar Ltd.

Established in 1979 by Frenchman Patrick le Guy the original goal was to supply a distribution company based in the Rungis-Paris market with fresh white fish, lobster and crab. Declining white fish supply at end of the 1980s caused the company to diversify into frozen and cooked products. Shipping fresh product for plants like Sofrimar is no longer an opportunity. Fifty percent of Sofrimar's present exports are prepared whelks for the Korean and Japanese markets. Sofrimar purchased £450,000 of scallops, £250,000 worth of lobster and £200,000 of white fish from local Kilmore Quay vessels during last trading year 1999-2000. This constitutes a gross figure of £900,000 with 60% distributed to the local offshore sector. This constitutes a first sale dependency on the local offshore supply of £450,000 (adopting a gross processing margin of 15%).

Sofrimar have two 'dedicated boats' fishing full time for shellfish. Sofrimar operates a levy on lobster bought locally on behalf of the South East Lobster Fishermen's Association that enables them to continue their re-stocking programme. They do not have any agreements at present with the local 'South East Shellfishermans (*sic.*) Association' who are an *ad hoc* group representing the scallop fishers.

Sofrimar workforce: 67 persons in 1999 (66 in 1996).
40 women and 24 men work on the factory floor

Employment catchment: only 3 persons form Kilmore Quay curacy. Sofrimar employment base: Ramsgrange, New Ross and Bannow, described as west of the New Line road from Wexford town. Sofrimar provide two mini buses each day to transport its workers.

Management's overview: Sofrimar has consolidated its market position as a processing plant over the last five years both in the Far Eastern whelk market and its traditional market for scallop and lobster in France. Sofrimar is supply dependent on a national basis with product prices being set by external market agency. Concern was expressed that Kilmore Quay is today 'tourist orientated' rather than being orientated toward the fishing industry as is the case for a port such as Killybegs.

Turnover 1999-2000: £5.4 millions. (£4.5 millions 1995-96)

Red Sail (Kilmore Quay) Ltd

Established in the mid-seventies following the purchase of Carbery Sea Products' plant, Red Sail Kilmore is part of the Red Sail network directed by Derek Younger from the Clogherhead plant. Red Sail's main export product is frozen prawn. Diminishing prawn stock off the East-coast has shifted the Kilmore plant to processing herring and scallop meat. The breakdown for the year 1999-2000 for these three products shows 450 tonnes of prawn; 22 tonnes of scallop meat; 120 tonnes of herring-delis and 64 tonnes of herring roe were processed. Export markets are situated in France, Spain, Germany and Japan with a growing national market (10%) for its scallop meat. Prawn sourcing is 60% in Cork and Galway; 30% imported from Holland and Denmark with the final 10% sourced locally. However, Red Sail sources 60% of its scallop meat from the Kilmore boats. Overall local first-sale dependency is estimated by Red Sail's general supervisor to be in the region of 10%. Red Sail have three 'dedicated' boats fishing for their products.

Red Sail Work Force: an average of 50 persons employed full time 40 of who are women. (This can go up to 60 women during peak times of herring and prawn processing.)

Employment catchment: 40% of the workforce come from a radius of 5 miles around Kilmore Quay. The rest are from Wexford town and Taghmon area. The employment base could be transcribed as north on the 'Town road'. Red Sail no longer organises bus transport for its employees as *'most of the women now own their own car'*.

Management overview: Markets and work practices 'have settled' over the last five years. Personnel turnover is under 10% and management considers their workforce to be *'happy with the set-up'*. Product sourcing for Red Sail is shifting increasingly to the South and West coasts but their experienced work force (average of 8 years) remain competitive.

Turnover 1999-2000: £4.5 millions.

Kilmore Fish Company Ltd.

Kilmore Fish Company (KFC) was established by Paul Younger (son of Red Sail's Derek who is also a shareholder of KFC) and his wife Mary in 1982 with the involvement of three skipper-owners who leased the failing Kilmore Fishermen's Co-operative's processing premises. KFC operates a parallel operation to Red Sail with 80% of its product being frozen prawn with 10% scallop meat and 10% whitefish making up KFC's overall business. KFC exports 70% of its frozen prawn to Italy, 20% into France and Spain while the final 10% is sold on the national market. KFC is now sourcing 40% of its prawn from Holland and Scotland while 50% is coming from an offshoot trading company, Clanawley Fish International, that operates out of Skibbereen, Co. Cork. The remaining 10% is sourced locally. (Clanawley Fish has recently opened a plant in Eyemouth in Scotland.) A key market for Kilmore Fish Company was the securing of a frozen prawn contract with Carrefour Supermarkets in France that is worth an estimated £1 million per year. KFC have two 'dedicated' offshore boats fishing for them.

KFC Workforce: 40 persons with 29 women (5 of who work in the office) and 11 men. Average age is mid-thirties and average work experience is 10 years.

Employment catchment: 25 of the women come from the parish of Kilmore with 10 of those from the village space. 9 of the men come from the parish of Kilmore, 4 of who are from the village. The KFC employment base is therefore Kilmore inscribed.

Management overview: The key to KFC's success in maintaining contracts such as with Carrefour is their committed workforce. The husband and wife team of Paul and Mary Younger has worked well according to those who work for them. Mary Younger comes from Nemestown, a town land adjoining the Quay village and she manages the day to day running of the business. Quality production is essential to KFC's continued survival but a lack of development space restrains expansion of the existing leased premises. Their share of the Italian market is increasing dependency on good logistics, as Italian market structures are very decentralised as opposed to the French market. As productivity margins are tightened with increased competition coming from other processing poles inside the Single Market space then KFC's geographical position could be threatened.

Turnover 1999-2000: £4.2 millions.

Saltees Ltd.

Saltees Fish Ltd. was established by the 'O'Flaherty Brothers Beam Trawler Owners' in 1997 as a trading company for its fleet's fresh fish landings mainly into Waterford. Operating from leased premises from the Co-operative Saltees Fish is managed by

Micheal O'Flaherty and operates two container trucks on 4 regular weekly trips to Barcelona and Madrid. O'Flaherty Brothers now own 8 vessels and have a partnership agreement with a ninth vessel berthed at Kilmore Quay. They also handle fish caught from at least two large vessels landing exclusively for Saltees Fish and charge the standard fish sales' commission. The Spanish market constitutes 60% of their export trade, mainly demersal species monk and megrim.

Employment: Saltees Fish has six men working for them handling and transporting their landings. There are two full time women managing the office whose work also includes managing their fleet's fishing personnel.

Turnover estimated for 2000: £5 millions.

Fish Distributors South East Ltd.

Established in the mid-eighties by Alec Scallan, son of Joseph Scallan a fisherman from Kilmore Quay, South-East Fish (as they are known locally) is situated in Wexford town's industrial estate on the Rosslare road. Alec Scallan is the most successful of the locally born fish buyers having started his business from the present fish shop premises on the West Quay that he bought from his uncle. He rented the same premises as Saltees Fish are now leasing from the Kilmore Co-operative and was the first to develop market links to the opening Spanish market in the early 1990s. Although no longer situated inside Kilmore Quay, South-East Fish employ almost half their full workforce of 80 persons from the surrounding area. South-East Fish own a 40 metre 1400 HP beam trawler, the Joseph S, and five transport units. 90% of scallop and prawn product is exported to Italy. There are two dedicated boats supplying South-East Fish with scallop meat from the Kilmore fleet.

Management overview: *'Kilmore is today more a leisure port than a fishing port. The fleet has outgrown the port with the Fleet Renewal Scheme. It is one thing for Ministers to want bigger fishing boats but there is also a need to have bigger harbours to berth them safely. It's like the rest of the country's choking infrastructures. We just don't seem to be able to scale things with the Celtic Tiger economy'.*

Annual turnover: £9.8 millions.

3.4. Local fish traders

There are three independent distributors of fresh fish servicing the Wexford hotel and retail trade from Kilmore. There is also a small crab-processing unit for the local market run by Mrs. T. Bates who employs two part-time workers. She is unable to keep up with local demand, sourcing her crab from surplus in Duncannon following the weekly Vigo bound 'Lalandi' container that collects live crab along the South coast. She thinks that with some help to purchase a new boiler unit she and her son would *'at least double'* her business: *'but it didn't interest BIM as I am not exporting'*.

Gross turnover from local fresh fish sales is difficult to estimate but the hotel, restaurant and chipper trade in south county Wexford has been growing *'since the last five years at a rate of 10% per annum'*, according to Stephen Yarr who, with his wife, runs the local fish shop since 1992. Both Kehoe's public house and the 'Silver Fox' restaurant in Kilmore Quay have experienced increased trade due to their sea food reputations. A conservative annual estimate of the local markets for fresh fish, excluding shellfish, would be £350,000.

3.5. Service sector

Average boat maintenance (as distinct from gear maintenance) constitutes an estimated 8% of the annual gross turnover of a large second-hand vessel. It is significant of the local attitude to improving technology that none of the Kilmore Quay boat owners applied for grant assistance to partake in the whitefish vessel renewal scheme proposed by BIM in 1997. *'BIM and the banks brought them all up to the hotel to explain to them the scheme but none of them took up the offer. In their view they were not getting a good deal and that was an end to it. I wonder about what I call this 'culture of self-sustainment' because as far as Kilmore men are concerned it has always been the way to go'.* Owners and crews do the bulk of the maintenance with a number of small operators providing specialist needs such as welding and engine replacements. The principle outside marine contractor for the Kilmore fishermen is Arklow Marine Services that has a 30 years tie with some of the older vessel owners.

Hardware and Marine Supplies

Simply known as 'Eugene's' this has become the centre for gear and boat maintenance supplies for the Kilmore boats. Eugene Kehoe left fishing to set up his business by renting a small shop premises on the factory front in 1988. In 1994, he expanded his marine service shop into a purpose-built premises and employs 5 persons. An estimated 85% of the services supplied go to maintaining the local fishing effort. The remainder is linked to the maritime leisure boats, cruising and angling, which use the port's marina

Marindus Marine

Marindus Marine engineering was established by a local man, Jim Moore (who is also Chairman of the Kilmore Quay Development Association) in 1988. Marindus operates across a number of the 'marine sectors': marine-fishing, marine-leisure, marine-commercial and finally marine-construction (that is linked to port development). Marindus employs 12 persons, four of who are apprentices. According to its director the majority of Marindus's work is still linked to the marine-fishing sector while their biggest problem is getting skilled labour due mainly *'to the neglect at national level of providing outlying areas such as Kilmore Quay with the necessary training structures for craftsmen. The fact is that Government agencies do not want to know about small time Ireland and marine enterprises like ourselves'.*

BIM Ice Plant

BIM's new automated ice plant was opened in 1999 and is situated on the new north pier. The ice plant is managed by Willie Fitzharris who has one other man to aid him. Mr. Fitzharris has *'been looking after the fishermen'* since 1969 when he started as the 'ice man' with the local Co-operative. 'Looking after the fishermen' is an important element in sustaining onshore successful fishing disciplines. The weekly tonnage of ice used by vessels is a stable 35 tonnes. Its presence on the harbour front also provides BIM with a presence and information linkage to Dublin of local ice usage. It is significant that some larger vessel owners do not use the BIM facilities preferring to manufacture their own ice. BIM's fishery officer does have an office beside the Co-op

Bates Gear

Net maintenance, foot-ropes and stone traps are provided to local beam vessels by two brothers, both of who fished out of Kilmore. Mick Bates had tried to get PESCA funding to help him set up his net mending business but was refused as *'PESCA was designed to take you out of the fishing sector altogether'.* He is still classed as 'being in the fish industry' and thus cannot receive funding to improve technology for net and stone trap making. He set up his small business three years ago using a 'back to work scheme' under the Wexford Partnership.

Transporters

Transport logistics are contracted out to local based transport companies: J.J. Devereux form Tomhaggard and Nolan's of New Ross. There is need to have more research into the exponential growth of commercial transport in the South Wexford area using the Rosslare port and how logistic cluster groups provide complementary markets' knowledge through local transport companies opening opportunity for a regional advantage. For example, 'Saltees Fish' transport fruit and vegetables from Spain back to Ireland during the winter months. As new markets embed between European regions what began as a fishing hunt is now developing into a trading company of considerable networking weight.

Local Businesses

There are three local shops each of which provide food supplies to various vessels when at sea. Credit (known as 'subs') to individual fishermen and their families is the 'unseen' hand of a local fishing economy that can be measured when the 'ABSOLUTELY NO CREDIT' sign appears in these shops and in the two public houses. These appeared during this study around July when fuel prices had eaten into share parts reducing the average square-up by £100-£150 per 10 Day trip. According to one of the shop owners: *'We are the bankers to a lot of the fishermen. It suits them in as much as they do not have to come face to face with financial institutions. They can change their cheques, count their cash and live their lives in almost obscurity down here without ever having to get involved in the responsibility of having a bank account and running it'*. There are no banking facilities or ATMs situated in the Quay but there are a local credit union and post office however.

Maritime Leisure Market

Kilmore Quay has good potential to exploit the growth in sea angling activities. At present there are 5 Department of the Marine licensed boats capable of transporting 50 fishers to the abundant grounds that surround the Quay. The Quay's sea angling market has been growing quickly over the last five years with 60% of a home market while the U.K. constitutes another 20% with 10% coming from Holland. Diving is another growing recreational activity exploiting the abundant wrecks that line the south-eastern coast line. The symbolic exploitation of these wrecks and the genealogy of the respective lost crews and passengers are the object of a Millennium Memorial Garden project situated on Forlorn Point.

Kilmore Quay- broadband node to the IT world

Both Eircom and ESAT telecommunication companies have their submarine optic cable entry nodes situated at Kilmore Quay. Crossfarnogue Point had had a telegraph station positioned there in the 1830s. LAN signals are processed and boosted by ESAT on property bought situated in the industrial zone of the village. Apart from the potential offered by proximity for direct cable connection there are two spin-offs possibilities for the local economy.

- (I) Chartering of local fishing boats to act as cable guards during maintenance operations at sea. At present three scallop boats have been contracted temporarily for this work. Cable security will be an increasingly important element of these communications companies' risk priorities as IT traffic flows expand exponentially.
- (II) All international LAN maps showing the new 'highways of information' highlight Kilmore Quay as the principal node of Irish linkage to global IT networks. The symbolic value of this fact has not been realised by locals, although the Bacon

and Associates Report did give some prominence to it⁵⁰. Proximity to a cable source reduces connection costs substantially for IT companies wishing to exploit emerging E-commerce opportunities.

R.N.L.I. Lifeboat

A lifeboat station with a Mersey Class lifeboat is based in Kilmore Quay and provides not just a safety service for passing sea traffic but a prestige symbol for the community. There has been a lifeboat situated in Kilmore for more than 150 years. Its discipline influence on fishermen's everyday lives is minimal with few active commercial fishermen being involved in its crew. Some fishers consider the life boat regime as a 'symbol of snobbery'; while its operating team of volunteers maintain a service itself an object of change as sea rescue work is modernised. One effect of at-sea change is the arbitrary use of the lifeboat by fishing vessels in need of temporary assistance such as a tow back to port. According to one experienced Kilmore skipper: *'Before local fishermen at sea helped each other when another had a problem like a failed engine or something like that. This is gone now. Men have neither the time nor the inclination to help each other so when there is a problem they call out the lifeboat.'*

The lifeboat station does provide fishermen with a valuable real time information along the national coastlines. The radio centre diffuses commentary on what is happening at sea that can in turn be transmitted to local vessel owners seeking up-dates on weather, tidal or emergency situations. The presence of this national surveillance network is a background of all sea communication and thus extends home port identity to those working in deeper waters. The lifeboat presence is perceived also as symbol of fishermen's 'duty to safe lives at sea' in the worst of sea conditions. As this 'duty' is voluntary its symbolic force is opposed to that of the 'professional' sea rescue services that are under the State's authority. Fishermen speak of increasing administrative isolation regarding their legitimacy in the transforming Irish marinescape thus the local lifeboat is often cited as an example of their potential force in securing human life at sea.

3.6 Port management authority

Kilmore Quay Harbour is described officially as a *'Fishing Port and Leisure Marina - A Wexford County Council Project'*. According to the Wexford County Council's publicity brochure Kilmore Quay is *'one of Ireland's premier fishing and leisure harbours'* and *'the port is managed by Wexford County Council'* since its official opening in 1997. Road signs on the national route out of Rosslare Europort describe Kilmore Quay however as *'a scenic village'*. Under the statutory instruments provided under section 37 of Local Government Act (1994) and Section 89 of The Harbours' Act (1996), Kilmore Quay is a designated Local Authority Port administered by Wexford County Council.

Authority over the foreshore was vested under lease from the Department of the Marine to the Wexford County Council. This new local administrative space runs from the high water mark from the new eastern quay around the basin enclosure and takes in the lay-down area used by fishermen and a new car park outside the old western quay. Local authority has been vested in the Harbour Master and his constables whose principle duty is to enforce a set of bye-laws drawn up by Wexford County Council to manage and secure the harbour for all vessels using its service while collecting harbour charges. Leisure vessel charges are estimated on a metre length basis with charges for larger fishing boats being set at approx. £100 per month.

⁵⁰ Peter Bacon & Associates, *County Wexford: A Strategy for Economic Development*, 1999, p. 19-23.

There are at present 65 commercial fishing vessels and 80 assorted leisure crafts berthed at the port, according to the Harbour Master (although this figure seems to be on the high side). Berthing dues already recorded show an annual income to the Wexford County Council of £80,000: £50,000 of which has come from the marine leisure sector using the 55-berth pontoon marina. Commercial fishing boats benefit from a reduced winter rate that explains their relatively low berth dues. The Harbour Master is not responsible for any Custom or Excise duties. There is no statutory requirement to negotiate with local representative bodies and apart from an *ad hoc* harbour committee composed of three fishing vessel owners the Harbour Master has wide autonomy to decide issues relating to the day to day running of the port.

The national flag is flown alongside the new Harbour Master's premises and a new port flag for Kilmore Quay, as also the County Council flag will eventually be flown as well. The present harbour master was recruited from the Navy where as a lieutenant he worked with Fishery Control. He receives a uniform allowance but is not obliged to carry a uniform of authority for the moment. Significantly the official notice board for the harbour is situated, according to the proposed bye-laws, *inside* the Harbour Master's offices and not on the harbour front itself.

While the position of Harbour Master has its origins with the development of Irish ports and imperial customs' control, the new position demands an inventive mode to legitimise a new county authority over what was a conventionally managed harbour. *'We are at a cross-roads at the moment. We believe that we should stay very much as we are. If we go down the road of one or the other elements that make up the users of the port then we will upset the balance we have at present between commercial fishing and marine leisure. I see myself as a public servant whose role is to manage this harbour and to establish the rules for its continued success on behalf of the Wexford County Council'*.

3.7. Fishing, Factory and Port - distinctive social spaces

Catching sector ties from crewmen to fish sales are rarely formalised by legal contracts in the Irish context but sanctioned as 'gentlemen's agreements'. On the other hand, the local processing field has consolidated its market alignment and constituted flexibility faced with demand, rather than supply, side market contingencies. The redeveloped port space is now managed by a local Harbour Authority to deliver a set of utilities to different marine vessels berthed there. There are effectively three overlapping but distinctive social spaces that orchestrate daily work around the village's marine topography: fishing, factory and port.

Spatial distribution of employment in the processing sector

Fish processing work ties have four distinctive population bases around the Kilmore Quay topography:

- (i) North toward the town of Wexford for Red Sail
- (ii) South-west along the New Line road to Duncannon for Sofrimar.
- (iii) Kilmore Fish's workforce is centred in the village curacy of Kilmore Quay,
- (iv) While the fourth based in the Kilmore parish works for South-East Fish situated in Wexford.

At the height of the season only 30% of the total workforce is drawn from the Kilmore area.

The socio-economic profile of the Kilmore Quay processing sector is:

Persons working in plants	Gross T/O 1999-2000	First Sale of fish
165 (70% women)	£14.1 millions	£7 millions (est.)

A significant fact regarding ties between wage earning processing personnel and the local fishing cohort is that very few factory workers have ties to a fishing background. *'To come off a fishing deck and take a job on the processing floor would be regarded as a defeat by the local lads working at sea'*, said one male factory worker. Although there is no open division between male factory workers and local crewmen there is the opinion that the fishers command more 'respect'. *'Like at sea you are your own boss not like in the factory. At sea you are with your mates. You gowl around like with them when catching and back on shore. That's not what it's like in the factory. There they tell you what to do'*. 20 year old who started out working in one of the local processing factories then quit to go scalloping. The opposite movement is still rare in Kilmore despite local opinion to the contrary.

The principal difference between the working identities that compose the majority working around fish is the dominance of women in the processing plants. It is the experienced women who control the competitive advantage of each processing plant. *'Fish processing is really women and they see things differently than men. No matter where you go in this business you couldn't give a man a woman's job. But you can give a woman a man's job. Not the lifting end but they can do everything faster. The arrival of the women into the business during the eighties is the key to its growth.'* **Senior factory supervisor.**

Very few of the 110 women workers are related directly to the offshore catching network. Out of the 29 full time local women employed by the Kilmore Fish Company only two are married to part-time fishermen. *'This is a quality commodity production enterprise and as far as most working here is concerned the fact that that commodity happens to come from the sea is of little or no consequence'* said the financial controller of one of the companies. There are few kinship ties to the local catching cohort, while commercial dependency on its fishing effort has been reduced to an average of 10% across the main species (except for the dependency on the 11 local boats equipped for scallop fishing).

This is a significant shift of perspective from when the fishermen's wives of only two generations ago counted out their husband's catch on the harbour each evening. From a subsistent familiar fishing village, on shore disciplines around fish have been modified by capital risk investment restructuring local value-added effort in France, Spain Italy and the Far East. Women are positioned also in the middle-management of processing, taking responsibility for the daily book balancing that insures control of cash flow and credit risk. The principal female middle-managers of five of the six main buying units who have direct contact with boat owners and their fish sales are related either by family or have worked together at one stage of their career. The principle of their work is based on the processor's futures' market logic: *'We buy now, pay now, sell now: but must wait three sometimes six months until our customers pay us'*. The most senior woman of this core middle management group describes her working relations with local fishermen over the years in the following terms:

'I did not come from a fishing family so I was not interested in fish or fishing politics. That was a great advantage as I could just do my work and go home in the evenings. The

older fishermen did not understand money. Yes they knew what they wanted regarding the boat and all that but had no idea about finance and saving. The younger men do and I think that is the biggest difference today. I sometimes felt though that I was working in the secret service here when it came to quoting prices. There is so much jealousy between fishermen that it can be very hard to keep things a secret... Yes the women who manage the accounts all know each other and we tell each other what's going on. But we have to be careful all the time."

While the rationalisation of fish value-added has secured the autonomy of each factory unit's workforce, local fishermen have been distanced from their presupposed community autonomy in sustaining that sector's future. Social relations and their proximity inside the village space demand silence regarding this fact, thus enforcing ambivalence between a 'fishing harbour' and/or leisure port' identity while an industrial infrastructure embeds into a rural topography. This underlines the opinion given for '*some new space or fishing enterprise centre*' that could arbitrate the new market logic that dominates the fishing game at all levels.

3.8. Ambivalent 'safe home harbour'

The third significant phenomenon is the new administrative space being superimposed by the 'project' policy of the Wexford County Council. Local opinion must sanction in line with the 'fishing story' as the new harbour configuration incorporates three sets of different vessels, i.e. commercial offshore fishing, inshore and leisure. The local authority controls the harbour's infrastructure and there is a fudging regarding the statutory sanctions applicable in the case of by-law non-compliance. While fishing vessel owners are obliged to pay harbour charges there is no statutory requirement to form a representative body to negotiate service delivery. A hard policy seems to be the approach adopted by Wexford County Council to insert regulation into its designated port. This is contested by some individual fishermen on the basis that the port '*should be managed by the Department of the Marine*' as '*it is primarily a fishing port*'. Partly underlying the fishermen's anxiety regarding the reorientation of the harbour's utility value is their belief in a 'safe home harbour'.

A safe home harbour does not just secure all weather berths that allow fishermen to leave their vessels and return home during a force 9 storm, a 'safe home harbour' projects a 'safe future' for re-investment into the fishing effort. What remains censured about the storm of 1989 (see Section 1.8), was the high level of local uncertainty about fishing futures that opened the way for the harbour's present ambivalent reorientation. The estimated £3.5 million port development completed in 1997 (after a 15 month closure), incorporated the degree of that uncertainty in the political compromise between 'fishing harbour' and 'leisure port'. The increasing leisure market, the geographical position of the Kilmore-Rosslare coastline as a maritime retirement belt and the high level of official incertitude regarding fishing futures combined to offer Wexford County Council the opportunity to take control of the port⁵¹. For many of the fishermen related to the village fishing families their perspective of the new harbour/port is that: '*they have been abandoned by the Department of the Marine*'.

What was not given a place during the planning of this '*compromise port*' according to one public official's term was a study of how lateral relations between the local fishing

⁵¹ Further reference will be made at the end of this study to Wexford County Council's Special Development Plan for Kilmore Quay, February 2000 that describes the development of the fishing village in 'a characteristic linear pattern along main street' and the objective to protect 'its vernacular character'.

effort and the new opportunities created by 'recreational sea life' might be managed within a coherent coastal economy framework. From evidence (collected for this study since the new port's opening in 1997) that instead of decreasing uncertainty regarding fishing futures the new harbour configuration has increased ambivalence, thus local tensions, with a sense of imposed marginalisation on offshore fishermen. One village born skipper non-owner put this reality in the following terms:

'What you see down there today in the new harbour as an extension of what didn't happen after 1989. What was a trawling port just disappeared overnight. People who should have gone on were not willing to go further. The majority of us were grounded and there was no help. Everything turned upside down in the space of a few hours. The whole village suffered then and some suffer still today. But no one said anything. There should have been a planned replacement with new boats but instead you have what you see down there.'

Consensus among the bigger beam trawler owners claim the new Kilmore Quay harbour is not a safe harbour particularly when there is south-east gale blowing. The larger beam trawlers use Waterford and Dunmore-East harbours that provide them with safer landing berths. Waterford Harbour Commissioners did serve notice that there may be no deep sea berthing space provided for offshore fishing vessels available from next year onwards⁵². This refocused attention on the new harbour and its short falls as a 'safe home harbour' for investment in bigger vessels. Ambivalent, sometimes contradictory signals, sent by the local authorities, BIM and the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources and from fishermen themselves all point to a 'no future' prophecy in increasing the local fishing effort. This is significant as it places at the centre of Kilmore Quay fishing story the continuing legitimisation of its harbour both as a vital work space and a historic symbol to reproduce its local fishing effort. Once this historic symbol and its force legitimising fishermen's *perceived right* to be the dominant group using the harbour is altered, (as it has been in this case), then it acts as 'a self-fulfilling prophecy' announcing the end of fishing as a future investment for younger men.

A harbour quay is the physical boundary between two social spaces through which the fisherman manages his working life: on shore and at sea. Its physical configuration, the size of its fishing boats, the pecking order of berths, its safety and service features, the presence or non-presence of institutional agencies, its logistic infrastructures to the outside world all combine to represent its localised fishing identity as being coherent with its fishing effort. For the moment harbour locales such as Kilmore Quay have not been framed as units of a national whole whether from a communicational or regulatory standpoint. If this configured spatial identity is to be provided with coherence then the penetration of new opportunities, such as recreational maritime activities or Internet fish marketing, need a greater scope than is present to allow their legitimate control to be woven into the increasingly marginalised fishing story. The insider tensions being generated are reflected in the words one of the older owner-skippers who is regarded as '*a difficult but always inventive and successful fisherman*':

'Look it is either a fishing harbour or a tourism harbour. It can't be both. It won't work and I'm saying that not as a begrudging fisherman but as a fisherman who has thirty years of fishing behind me and who was never asked his opinion about what they were going to do here in this port. How the hell can I say to my son that he should come into fishing without having a safe harbour and the possibility ever to have tonnage enough to fish. No they've buried us here and it's a scandal because the Department of the Marine

⁵² This decision has been reversed but not sanctioned by any clear strategic plan for the moment.

is part of this State. They were given the job to protect our living and instead of that they've washed their hands of us. Who in Wexford County Council knows anything about fishing and the problems we have getting out to sea each day? They are only interested in 'tourism'. Out at sea we have controls everywhere that force us everyday to break the law to make that living. Yes break the law because we have to or we could never fish. Now we have laws in the harbour about where we have to tie up, where we have to put our gear and I hear that the Harbour Master may have the right to stop us fishing if we don't have regulated boats. All of that makes this life more and more absurd everyday and that will bury us here for good'.

Whatever about the prejudices that sustain conventional rights present in this statement, it reflects the anxiety of artisan vessel owners regarding the legitimacy of their present patrimonial position. Years of having to play the quota control game by degrees of illegitimacy to produce profits have not provided commercial fishermen with the confidence to trust either public authority or their own representative bodies. *'Divide and conquer has always been the way, and divide and conquer has worked to keep us away from ourselves'.*

3.9. Forces of Change

The forces determining structural change in the Kilmore Quay's social economy and thus affecting its offshore fishing network are multiplex.

- (i) The autonomy of the local fish processing field with their low dependency on the local fishing effort and workforce coming from the village population. The catching sector has been decoupled from conventional ties with the processing field (except for inshore shellfish and scallop meat dependency) thus opening the way for commercial fishing to expand contractual arrangements with global markets to secure its future investment strategies.
- (ii) The increasing value of leisure and recreational 'maritime' markets rather than a sustainable 'offshore fishing' environment. This reorientation of the village's economic outlook is sanctioned not just by market forces but by public policy. Coastal land values have aligned themselves with quality second-residence prices and speculation has altered hinterland usage toward the green tourism market. According to the principal estate agent operating in the Kilmore Quay area *'land prices have doubled within the last four years'* with the average price of a half acre building site being quoted at £35,000. The core of the village's fishing cottage vernacular has become a tourist attraction as has the harbour's working space during an increasing set of visitor seasons. Fishing as 'a way of life' risks being incorporated into a historical heritage project rather than an integrated element of its coastal economy⁵³.

⁵³ Wexford County Council's proposed special schedule development plan draft for Kilmore Quay clearly emphasises the need to conserve the village space while giving outline to its industrial zone. The draft declares the need to consolidate and conserve the 'scale, character and identity of the village' with the 're-enforcement of its mixed use nature'. In section 5.1 the plan announces that *'the policies and objectives of this plan are designed to strengthen the tourism role of Kilmore Quay while protecting the village's unique built environment and spatial character'* (p.6). Section 6.1 announces the Council's aim to continue *'development of the fishing and ancillary industries as the economic mainstay of the village'*. What is interesting is that there is on one hand the official recognition that Kilmore Quay has developed as a fishing village 'in a characteristic linear pattern along main street' while on the other hand little or no empirical data as to how it is actually evolving as a modern offshore fishing fleet requiring a new integrated and intelligent management

- (iii) The sense of 'imposed' marginalisation of offshore fishermen has increased between two official authority fields: tighter at sea regulations and a new harbour management authority. *Who* now is the ultimate 'authority' in this harbour-marine coastal space? Self-regulation can only go some of the way in defining a legitimate local hierarchy. This is interpreted by local boat owners who express their concern for '*the psychological*' dimension of fishing morale and its need for a communication system for offshore fishing. There is also a need for new symbol of overall fishing and aquatic management authority, for ranking and a general enforcement of a sea working discipline that should not be separated from the infrastructure development of its coastal economy.
- (iv) The absence of a common social field representing all interests in the port and its apprenticeship to deal with co-operation and conflict. Two possible bodies for local action are not organised professionally to manage reorientation of the village space in relation to its maritime ecology. They are the Kilmore Fishermen's Co-operative and the Kilmore Quay Development Association; both of which have suffered internal struggles that affect their legitimacy to act as coherent representational bodies. The result is a unilateral approach by Wexford County Council to impose regulatory order without the statutory involvement of any local committee representations.

3.10. Conclusion

The 'innovative' development of Kilmore Quay harbour with its recreational and industrial zones will require, by necessity, a re-framing of a statutory representation of all user interests as integral to its coastal development. This may not now be possible within a national context as the decentralisation of the Department for the Marine and Natural Resource's statutory responsibility to manage this fishing/leisure port's infrastructure has been transferred. What is evolving is a localised struggle between the historical rights of fishermen and the drive by local authority to manage its new resource base⁵⁴. There is a clear demarcation of control levels emerging in smaller Irish local authority ports like Kilmore Quay. State authority structures to co-ordinate strategic coherence are evaporating as on one side the local authority takes charge of the harbour locale within the context of an overall county-based management while the aquatic catching environment is firmly controlled by European regulation, but policed by the national naval force.

If the technocratic guideline behind this divisive policy is to endorse 'local sustainability' of the fishing effort any co-ordinated regional framework to manage this 'bottom-up' policy is absent. This is underlined in the Peter Bacon and Associates report that acknowledges 'capacity constraints' that are emerging in Kilmore Quay⁵⁵. However, 'capacity' here means boat size berthing space and does not include the human resources' capacity and lateral ties already embedded to continue offshore fishing as a viable working life. In the Wexford County Council's Draft Development Plan 2000 Section 5.11 declares '*to encourage fishing and aquaculture developments as compatible with the*

structure to sustain its future. This is why for many fishermen in the Quay the policy of the Council is considered to be one of 'tourism conservation' and not elaborating a coherent and dynamic plan for an industrial coastal economy.

⁵⁴ This is also seems to be the case in regard to local mussel farmers and Wexford Harbour Commissioners after the development of the new quay front. See *The Irish Skipper*, October 2000 p. 8.

⁵⁵ County Wexford - A Strategy for Economic Development, Peter Bacon & Associates, 1998, p.15.

existing land/ coastal areas such as tourism amenity and recreation'. This finds confirmation by the Wexford Enterprise Initiative Report with an undertaking for 'further investment' to 'sustain' Kilmore Quay's 'fishing development' (but this to be made available through the Department for the Marine and Natural Resources). No other mention is made of fishing under the context of 'Industry and Enterprise'⁵⁶.

The approach of this study has been to frame a local catching effort in relation to its historical disposition and current human resource base that produce risk taking and 'going to sea' as daily work. The downstream sector produced directly by the modernisation of fishing in Kilmore Quay, (including fish processing and marine leisure), is now distanced from its local fishing disciplines. Rather than formulating an integrating management strategy for the fishing port's future as part of the wider coastal economy, offshore fishing is being effectively 'cut loose' and forced out into as yet undefined space. Given that the gross value of both first sale and processed fish is worth well in excess of £20 millions per annum, with direct employment from fishing of three hundred persons; it is not a negative base from which to plan a coherent future.

However, the dominance of agriculture in County Wexford and its historic structures of representation, such as the County Committee of Agriculture, are significant factors in maintaining the fishing industry in a secondary, even denigrated, position. Commercial fishing and Wexford fishermen have always sought to remain distant from any authority (this includes other fishermen's organisations) and thus have compounded their own problems related to the representation of their collective interests and practical difficulties. Part of the solution may be the innovation of a regional-based position for the offshore fishing sector to elaborate and co-ordinate a regional fishing enterprise policy. Such a position needs a statutory and professional status, to be included in the Chamber of Commerce and to provide pertinent knowledge support and professional guidance to all the players. It is the absence of a coherent 'top-down' policy to direct the fishing development of such small ports like Kilmore Quay that reflects the lack of critical thinking at national level regarding people and change in Irish fishing practices.

⁵⁶ *Wexford Enterprise Initiative-Report* February 2000. Interestingly there was not a representative of the fishing sector on the committee of the Wexford Enterprise Initiative. This fact must be placed in the context of Co. Wexford as Ireland's largest maritime county with a rapidly developing coastal zone economy.



Section 4

Women and Change in Offshore Fishing

"I always thought that Kilmore Quay was a bit like what a pioneer town must have been like in America. Men were never about but always somewhere over the horizon looking for gold".

Daughter of a first generation fisherman.

"In general, all you are doing is wishing your life away". **Wife of Kilmore crewman fishing for 15 years.**

4.1. Background

There were only two daughters of Kilmore fishermen that went fishing during the last decade. Both decided against staying at sea as according to one of them '*it was too physical*' but this may be more due to the perception of fishing as being a '*macho thing*'. The role of women in the evolution of male dominated fishing and the weight of their opinion influences men's views about their working lives. As before, when women counted out the boxes of their husband's boats generating competition among local families, women discreetly influence the fishing game in relation to how men perceive their social ranking. There is a correlation with the transformation of Irish agricultural structures during European transition and a new generation of fishers trying to manage their social lives in relation to increased productivity at sea⁵⁷. The general opinion voiced during this field study is summed up by the phrase: *fishing is antisocial*. However, such common sense hides more than it can reveal as tensions between absent fathers and expectant children pose questions for the future of how Irish offshore fishing is organised. "*I have to say that it is a single parent society of sorts, but then again fathers are there some of the time and there is dependency on them to bring home the wages. So what it is really I just don't know*".

How women represent their lives as wives, partners, mothers and daughters of fishermen is pertinent to objectify the shifting of fishing's position as a way of life in the local hierarchy. The penetration of a commercial logic into what was a closed network of familiar relations induces a specific sociological phenomenon: disenchantment⁵⁸. 'Going

⁵⁷ See Pat O'Hara's article on the dominant role of women in education strategies of farmer's children especially their daughters. *Women on Irish Farms*, Waganinge, Circle for European Studies, 1993.

⁵⁸ The concept 'disenchantment' means the collapse of the unconsciousness surrounding social relations inscribed into a local economic order. People take their world for granted and believe them selves to be autonomous or 'self-sufficient' but this changes with the penetration of a global market logic (see Sec.3.6). Fishermen now compare their wages and conditions with those of local factory and building site workers as part of the Celtic Tiger syndrome. A man's fishing identity can only be confirmed inside the social group aligned to him by public prejudice thus underlining the absence of a legitimised fishing career pathway. By this pragmatic comparison younger crewmen now evaluate their chances in the matrimonial market and realise that, while they may be still 'respected' locally, they are no longer sought after by partners to make a marriage contract. The status-symbol for a single fisherman is his car and when possible a second hand BMW. One of the ostentatious signs of their new wealth in the 1980s was the phrase: '*he's crashing cars every*

fishing' is no longer given its romantic 'Shoals of Herring' image in Irish society. It has been devalued as a way of life because legitimacy is questioned regarding fish stocks, low safety levels, ageing boats and local stereotyping of 'fishermen' as marginal, drug pushing, tattooed tearaways. Offshore fishing and its magic do not aspire to the expectations of young women seeking a partner for life. Fishermen are no longer cool as they were during the good years of the 1970s and 1980s. Fishermen, goes the story, cannot be trusted to stay in the same place for more than a pint. The more romantic image of them selves as '*pirates*' is sometimes closer to the perceived truth of plunderers than they might wish it to be.

The experiences of fishermen's wives and partners unveil another world than that of narrow opinion. Inside their homes children are brought up often without the presence of fathers during the early rites of passage: first communion, football matches, confirmation and birthdays. This has improved somewhat with the possibility of replacement crewmen but for those daughters of fishermen, now mothers themselves, their fathers were men '*who came and went in the dark*'. Fishermen then: the invisible fathers? '*Sort of*' as one woman put it, '*as you never had your father, you just had your mother to tell you what to do*'. Unlike the farmer patriarch, the fisher patriarch commanded respect from a distanced absence over his growing sons. For smaller children it was a great distance to the unknown. That unknown today focuses not on the sea but on the boat. Effectively, Daddy lives in and works in another 'home' and the identification with Daddy's boat is part of a fisherman's child's understanding of their communal identity. '*My Daddy is a fisherman, he lives in a boat,*' said one seven year old. 'What does he do?' asked the man. '*He....he...don't know..he's in the boat all the time*'.

For many women when men come back from '*living in their boat*' it is a moment of tension rather than joy. It is not just that men work together on the decks of boats, but they live for stretches of seven to ten days confined to a very small social habitat. Two experienced crewmen give their point of view reflecting the social space of the boat and the 'strange' neutral territory between that space and the home space onshore:

" You live in a tin can with four men for ten sometimes fourteen days. You get to know them but it is always very difficult to live with some people. You kind of learn to keep to your own. You don't talk much. I hate those men who think they have to tell you everything. They don't last. Like you are busy all the time on a boat, 24 hours on 24. Your time and space is different than onshore. You get very little sleep. You are tired all the time. The best time men talk is the last 24 hours before you are coming home. At the start nobody talks because men like me when they start fourteen days are just thinking about their families because that is why you do it. You are thinking about the kids and hoping to get the first two days done without jumping ship. But when the boat is coming in everyone talks about what he is going back to and they yap and bop and are really, really happy".

"The strangest journey of my life I make every time I come ashore and get in the car to drive home. Between the harbour wall and my front door I travel in a sort of no man's land. I never get used to it. I never understand why I feel so strange, so out of place on that journey home. As I walk up to my own house door I have always the feeling of being a stranger".

second week'. Reference here is made also to French sociologist's Pierre Bourdieu's relevant work on the economic transformation of agriculture and its correlation to celibacy in '*Reproduction interdite-la dimension symbolique de la domination économique*', in *Etudes Rurales*, No.113-114, Paris, January-June, 1988 pp. 15-36.

Working life on a fishing boat is not comparable with life on a merchant-vessel as the psychological force of the boat's constant presence is intrinsic with the local crew's alienated lives onshore. The boat binds tightly its crew into the timeless fishing gamble, insulates them from their social backgrounds and is the object of repressed resentment, even hatred, for many of the partners of these men. *"When you get out there, cross over the horizon, you can forget everything, all the problems you might have back onshore. Once you are out there, the sea commands and you forget everything else"*. The boat then represents both a sea-home and a work-place as crewmen's dominant symbol of identity rather than that of their onshore household. Take the boat away from committed fishermen and you take *'their souls'* or in sociological terms you take away their objectified patrimony. For many wives it is therefore not the social space of their house that dominates as their family's value of values but the omnipresence of the insatiable boat. *"Everything we made went back into his boat, and I mean everything"*.

The problem is one of internalised boundaries. Whereas the strategy of women to distance the farm household from the farm economic unit was vital in converting farming mentalities, this division between 'boat home' and 'family household' is very different for fishermen. One of the primary causes is the instability of a household budget that differentiates between the gross boat earnings and that of a regular wage income. Younger partners of fishermen seek a clearer balance between the dominant boat and their individual family households. However, the fishing family household is still fungible in the boat's unitary economic and symbolic performance. One 49 year old woman wrote her experience regarding to 'being more involved' in her partner's fishing life. She does the accounts for her partner's boat. She described her standpoint:

"I think that most fishermen are really not interested in the running of the home as they feel that they have enough to do with coping with their boat. But as I am also involved with my partner in the management of the boat I feel that they should also be interested in the home".

Contrary to what might be supposed, fishermen's partners do not support each other in any organised or conscious way but live family lives in isolation. Like their men, this is partly due to the share-fishing convention that demands belief in self-autonomy and distance to renegotiate crewing opportunity. This again is changing as the younger women realise, earlier than the previous generation did, that they must make efforts to build a social life for themselves without active participation by their men. The voice of fishermen's wives and partners tends to be heard in the media only when there has been a tragic drowning or accident at sea. Little enquiry has been undertaken into difficulties rearing a family when it is seldom possible to plan a day out, or in many cases, to know whether or not there will be a wage at the end of the month. Most women during this study expressed the view that they have no statutory retirement plan in place and thus must constantly reflect on *'what happens when he can't fish no more'*. It was within this context that pertinent questions needed posing after the McLaughlin and Griffith judgements to regulate increasingly precarious social situations by providing a rationally planned future for Irish fishermen and their families. The question that still needs answering was posed by many women when they spoke about the difficulties of not seeing their men for sometimes three weeks: *why fish if you can't enjoy the precious moments of family life?*

For most of them, other than the dominant actors, the answer is blunt: *necessity*.

For the women interviewed for this study it was the first time they had spoken publicly about their lives and difficulties related to rearing children with a father figure that

remained closer to 'Santa Claus' than any other role type. The results from a small sample questionnaire aiming to set a research framework and extracts of what they have to say are given in this section.

One of the central issues indicated by all women interviewed is the change in temporalities of offshore fishing and its effect on a manageable and enriching family life. Besides the fact that their men have had to increase productivity to gain equivalent wages, women have had to manage onshore lives increasingly more complex than before. It needs to be underlined that any regulation of the 'time at sea' problem, (the trip on/trip off roster having improved the situation), must include fishermen's wives and partners' point of view about '*time on shore*'. While bad weather and maintenance contingency will always remain a variable of the generic 'fishing problem', there are social problems that have not been dealt with in any rational mode regarding the onshore conditions of crewmen's families.

4.2 Women and Change in Fishing: questionnaire results

Following a meeting organised at the beginning of August with a number of fishermen's wives and partners a short agenda of relevant topics was compiled and 25 questionnaires distributed by hand to a cross-section of women. A total of fifteen questionnaires have been returned by post over a three-week period; a significantly higher response percentage than crewmen. A number of full-length interviews were recorded including one group session with three young partners to discuss child rearing and difficulties regarding increasing time at sea. The results of the sample questionnaire are presented below. Different points of view from the interview sequence are then presented with a concluding synthesis of these preliminary findings. The questionnaire was kept short as women expressed the opinion (during the preliminary meeting) that first stage results would aid in 'breaking the ice' to mobilise a second larger gathering to discuss topics. It is hoped that this will happen in the near future when this study report will be made available to interested persons.

Born: Kilmore Quay: 5

5 miles from Quay: 3

Co. Wexford: 2

Rest of Ireland: 1

Outside Ireland: 4 U.K.

Total sample: 15 (10 women coming from outside the Quay)

Average age of respondents: 30 years (lowest age 19: oldest age 53)

Are you directly related to a fishing family: Yes: 10, No: 5

(This figure included 5 women from outside Kilmore who had family backgrounds in fishing)

How many years have you been living with your partner:

1-3 years: 2 **4-7 years:** 5 **More than 7 years:** 8

Status:

Married: 8

Living with partner: 6

Divorced: 1

Children: there are 32 dependent children under 18 years. Average age: 5.5 years. Only one respondent has no child.

Did you do:

Leaving Certificate: 9

Technical Training

3rd Level

Other: 6 (It is difficult to know what the 3 the Irish of these mean: it can be presumed given their age that it is the Intermediate Certificate). These higher levels of education equate with national patterns where women have a higher level of secondary education than of their partner's.

Living accommodation:

Living in rented accommodation: 4

Own House: 11 (3 of which are public authority housing).

Do you have a car and use it: Yes: 14 No: 1

Are you presently working?: No: 11 Yes: 4

If not working would you wish to get back into the workplace?

Yes: 7 No: 4

Do you have private health cover for your family:

Yes: 4 No: 11

Do you have a life insurance policy:

Yes: 6. No: 9

Given that many crewmen have no social insurance payments in order the profile of fishing families' general social welfare is 'inadequately secured'. Women adopt the similar response as their partner's when speaking about 'social welfare' in general. As them, they presuppose that all relations with the State must be judged from a point of view of 'value' for money. There is little, of any, sense of social solidarity regarding public goods such as health and education.

Do you and your partner have a joint bank account?

Yes: 11 No: 4

This question gives a profile of those without a joint-bank account to be all over 40 years of age.

Do you consider that you run the household, pay the bills etc. on your own:

Yes: 10 No: 5

If 'No' do you consider that you work together equally as a team: 4

Or do you take the important decisions regarding your children's needs: 1.

Do you consider that you lead 'a separate life' from that of your partner's:

Yes: 9

No: 5

Sometimes: 1

Would you wish to be more involved in your partner's fishing life:

Yes: 10

No: 4 (1 woman does the accounts of her husband's boat).

Could you outline problems linked to your partner's work, type of fishing, time away, budgets that you consider need better understanding. Please use the blank page attached herewith.

4.3. Points of view of women's lives with fishermen

The daughter

The first interviewee (Interviewee A) is the daughter of one of Kilmore's first generation fishermen. This is an extract of comments passed along alongside two other fishermen's partners (Interviewee's B & C).

INTERVIEWEE A: "I am the daughter of a fisherman. I didn't marry myself in the end. I have two children by a man I love but I preferred to remain single. When I think of it now while discussing the type of absent father fishing communities, I might have been better off had I married a fisherman as it suits my mentality.

"I can only remember my father as always having seen him in the dark. I can still remember the excitement when he was coming home. It was always like Santa Claus. That must have been very hard on my mother. No, I *know* it was very hard on my mother who had to look after five of us and also run a small farm. I can also remember that she had to deal with Daddy's family who were all a fishing family. As she did not come from fishing stock but from a farming family she had to battle with them all of the time. It was not easy for her.

Fishing is not like farming because I knew the two sides of the story if you like. In farming there the woman and the man are face to face. Fishermen are gone most of the time and I can remember my mother and father speaking together only in the dark. Very strange when you think of that now. I think there is a change in that today. I'd say that men are more family orientated today than those times. Are they diminished as fathers themselves?

INTERVIEWEE B: Oh yeah. There are moments when you as the woman of the house even resent what they do as fathers when they are home. Even sometimes when it comes to making a decision.

INTERVIEWEE C: You know you have to make them feel important for a moment when they are at home. I don't know sometimes I give him a little present or something like just to show him that I care for him.

INTERVIEWEE B: Yes I know that because my man feels guilty every time about going back to sea.

INTERVIEWEE C: Mine too! They are always saying sorry about going back to sea. They apologise to me and the kids from time to time about having to go out!

INTERVIEWEE A: Yes that is what I meant. I think that fishermen feel they are not good fathers or less than the others and that this leaves them in an anxious, unsure frame of mind when they are onshore. They are always strangers no not strangers but well, fishermen for their children.

The mother

"I hate him going out fishing but I never say it to him. No I wouldn't do that. I know he hates it also. But there is a magic out there he told me. He phones us everyday, it's less I think to assure us than to reassure himself. He tells me over the phone: "Hey Mam we are somewhere off the Isle of Man" and that he was looking at dolphins or something. There is a magic at sea for him and he talks about the dreams a lot. They are so vivid.

"There is a pattern to these lads' lives. I see it anyway quite clearly. They hate school and they leave at sixteen or even before to go fishing. Nobody says anything because fishing is local. They get all this money into their hands and they think this is great. It's enough to burn a hole in their pockets. Then within a few years their girlfriends are pregnant and they live together in a caravan. After that the girlfriend gets tired of their lifestyle and quits. I can see that everywhere among these young guys like my son. But what can you say.

"I think that one of the problems is all that money and no training. Look when my son went onto a boat first they only thing they did was to give him a filleting knife and said to get on with it. Do you know that he took watch after only four trips. For God's sakes' at sixteen he was doing watch in the middle of the night and in the middle of the Irish Sea. The chap could hardly navigate his way to school yet here he is doing this. I say nothing because...well I don't want to loose him either."

Wives that stand by their man

"I am married thirty years to a fisherman. When I was expecting children you had to get somebody other than your husband to help. I used to go to my mother. I did not have a car until the mid-1980s so I had to stay at home all the time. You had always to go and get somebody to help when there was a problem. (Name of husband) and I had little time together except the odd weekend he was home. He went on trips of ten to fourteen days in the 1970s. I think that the biggest change in my life with a fisherman was when I got the car and could drive to my mother's house...

"For wives of fishermen they have to be there always for their men. That is why marriages in fishing families are breaking down. You had to stick through the hard times but today the wives and women do not want to do that. Even if you had wanted to leave your husband in those days where could a woman with five small kids go? There was no where for her to go. I don't blame the women of today for wanting things different when their men are away at sea for ten or more days. I think that five days away is enough. Yes it is true that marriages and relationships are breaking down but I think most of that is due to the fact that men are away at sea too long...

"In the old days I was never outside that door. Later when (Name of husband) came home after the longer trips our night out was Saturday. We never went out much anyway. We are a close family and we prefer to stay at home and have a drink in the house...

I remember going back (Name of husband) was on (a boat he skippered for a Kilmore family) and we had three small children. It was Christmas and (Name of husband) came in on Christmas Eve and had to ask the boat owner for a sub of £10 to buy Santa's presents and the Christmas dinner. I bought two tricycles and the Christmas dinner out of that £10 and (Name of husband) went back to sea on St. Stephen's Day. We took decisions about going to sea and we have a golden rule in this house. If you don't make it in six days then you won't make it on the seventh. The Sabbath is sacred and a day of rest. So Sundays have always been very important for this family.

What has happened then to the Sunday tradition of rest?

"It is money. They need to have money to keep up appearances, fast cars and if they have kids the best of everything. Standards. That is what it is all about. I think my children have a sense of value but there are so many others that don't. When those ones go out to buy something they must look at the label. It is only a cash and credit world they know! (Name of husband) has a credit card for a year now and we only use it when we both go

out to shop. I don't have a credit card. "They now have the children before they have the site. In my time if you had a child outside wedlock you'd be banished from the community. They I mean the young fishermen don't understand that you can't have anything for yourself except from fishing. I don't approve of lads being on the social welfare and fishing as well. They are getting it both sides and there are men that need it a lot more than others and they are not getting it. They don't know what saving up for the rainy day is and if they don't know about stormy days then they should not be fishing. We always had to think about the rainy day, the hard times went with the good. Today there is no such thing as a poor day!

"As a fisherman's wife I never tried to influence (Name of husband) in his decisions because it was enough for him to take them in the first place. I was always there for him. I always gave him respect because (Name of husband) is and was always his own man. Sometimes he did ask me for advice for big things and I'd always say: If you think you can make a go of it, go ahead. Don't get me wrong it was not a marriage made in Heaven. We had our bad moments also but I think a fisherman's wife must be behind him. Behind every good man there is good woman is what I have always said and I've lived enough to see it proved.

"I don't think that the younger ones want to get into the hardship that their fathers had. But look at all the suicides around here. Look at those that threw themselves off the bridges at Wexford and Enniscorthy. It is either they had too much or nothing at all. I would not say that I am a tough woman but I have always told my children that if you have children you must rear them outside this house. We have had enough rearing in this house. I reared my children like I was reared. It was their decision not to go to Mass. Today it's the Disco on Sunday night, maybe it is a sort of ritual. They don't want to go to Mass but they *have* to go to the Disco. But you can't talk about what happens there. What happens in the Disco on Sunday nights as my daughter says 'must stay in the Disco'...

"You see fishing is our livelihood. It is our way of life. For many of the young men it is only a way to get money."

"In general all you are ever doing is wishing your life away. You never get used to fishing, never get used to it as a way of life. You can't plan anything. You can't plan your own life. You rear your kids on your own. You think you will get used to it. But I say all you are ever doing is wishing your life away. My child, who is now seven, spends his days waiting for his father to come home from the boat. When (Name of husband) does come home the child spends his time asking him when he is going to leave again. Yes I would have my man back in the house but fishing is their way of life. There is only one thing they ever talk about: boats and fishing. Look when he comes home he buys all the magazines and papers about boats and fishing he can. He spends his time reading up and then going down each morning to the harbour to talk with the other men about fishing. I say to him did you not get enough of that when you were at sea. But no. I'd say to him don't worry the harbour will be there in the morning without you going down to check that it still is. But it does not change anything. There was a time in our lives that it was only Monday until Friday fishing. But now that has gone and it never stops...

"Fishing is a life for a young man and not a married man with kids. It's getting harder and harder and it effects the whole family and your social life. I live a separate life. I now go out to weddings and hen parties. I live a separate life now and I say to myself all the time 'don't lie down, get out there and have a life for yourself'. Attitudes have changed and you

have to live your life and you just cannot let it revolve around fishing. For years fishermen's wives did not go outside their doors for fear of what might be said. I was the same but that has now changed. You have to keep living...

"I'll tell you what it is like first when you marry into fishing. They all tell you it will change. It's like a close death and how people come to tell you that everything will be healed in time. But do you know something, they never tell you how long it will take before you are healed. It's the same for fishing. They told me 'oh you'll see it will change and he will be home'. Well that was more than twelve years ago and I've given up waiting. Don't get me wrong I love my man and care for him. But look they say to him to pay his own PRSI and that he is 'self-employed' but what does (Name of husband) own? Nothing. He owns nothing but they still go on telling him that he is 'self-employed'. It's time the government put a stop to that lie.

"That's the times. Our men don't know any anything else and Kilmore Quay don't know any different. Boats is their life and on their days off they only thing that they can think of doing is to go down the pier".

The new partners

These extracts were taken from a discussion among three partners of offshore fishermen all working for owners. The women have an average age of 29 and there are 7 dependent children between them. The discussion was recorded and transcribed. What was interesting about this discussion is that took place in the presence of their men and some of their reactions are also given. Extracts are chosen as being typical of difficulties highlighted by women during this research. The manner in which they are discussed is pertinent to the differences between points of view between women themselves and arrangements made inside fisher family units.

Could you take up that point (Partner A) you made about feeling resentment when your husband comes back from sea?

Fisherman A (her husband): This is not now for every woman. (*laughter*)

Partner A: No. But it is just that you have this big build up and you talk to him all week on the mobile or maybe two times per week and you get this big buzz right. Daddy is going to come home. (Name of husband)'s coming home and you get the kids organised and me organised and shit I know every time what's going to happen the minute he walks in that door. The kids are going to go zip toward him like a magnet and I'm standing at the door and all I want to do is get the hell out of the house, to do something else, put the washing on the line, say hello and greet him then leave him and the kids for that time. I just want to get into the car and drive away!

Partner B (a partner with Fisherman B two children): Yes it is the same for me because they are so tired, wrecked when they come home. Like they are trying to stay awake when they come home but they are always too wrecked. It takes at least 24 hours for them to get over their trip.

Fisherman S (a single fisherman): It's an abnormal life!

Fisherman B: It is not an abnormal life. I don't think it is. It depends on whether you are married or single!

Partner B: Family makes it harder. No, not harder but it's more rewarding.

Fisherman S: When I said it was abnormal I mean it is not a normal job. You can't relate fishing to an onshore job.

You would not agree with Fisherman S's point of view?

Fisherman B: Well I agree that it is different than lots of job but abnormal no. I think that's part of the problem of going on about fishing as being so different. It's work for me and the self-employed business just doesn't mean anything. I work for my wages.

Fisherman S: Yea but your day's work is not a day. It's 24 hours all the time and you have to work with the same persons day in day on a small boat out whether you like them or not.

Partner A: You see listening to you it does my head in. You are off talking about the boat and here we are trying to talk about what life is like in your homes! I resent all of the lads and your skipper and whoever else is on the boat that week because you have my man for that week and I don't. I don't resent you in a bad way but why can't that be me! You all know that I don't want him back everyday like if he got a shore job I'd kill him. But when he comes home after ten days away he is invading my privacy, my routine is upset, everything is completely turned upside down when he walks in that door. When I see that black bag filled with dirty clothes I just want to say to him: bring it with you love to the pub and do something else because I don't want to do this! (*laughter*)

Partner B: Oh yea I know that feeling. They want to go out. They are on the boat all the week and all they want to do is go out and see their friends. Do you know who they are: the same lads as on the boat. That's fine but they kind of forget sometimes that you have been left alone with the kids all that time. It's very hard and it's very lonely. I'm not so outgoing maybe as I should but I don't go out when S is at sea.

Fisherman S: Most fishermen's wives never go out. That's the way it is.

Partner B: You know it is lonely. Sometimes you feel that you are being pushed aside when they are at home. You can understand that they want to go and see your friends. But what about my friends ?

Partner A: Yea at night time I think it is nice to speak to somebody over four foot! (*laughter*)

Fisherman B: Adult company!

Partner A: You get pissed off with the gaga and googoo and the 'Hi Ya' and 'everything is OK and 'everything is just fine'. You are going around the bend because on your own it's just too hard. It's always the same 'when is Daddy coming home' or 'when is Daddy going back to the boat'. If it is not the kids it's the others. 'Is he home ?' or 'when is he back?'. Sometimes I explode and say: *hey I'm off to sea next week myself and the kids*. Yea and we are never coming back!

Partner B: My Dad was a fisherman and growing up my mother always said avoid them like the plague and look I'm living with one for nine years.

Partner A: Don't marry a fisherman my mother said or they will break your heart.

Partner C: Well I didn't come from a fishing background so we didn't talk about it. I don't think my family are upset in any way that I'm living with (Fisherman B). My relationship with (Fisherman B) took five years to settle in and it was difficult. But I don't really know whether I manage my household life differently from other fishermen's partners.

Partner A: But I look after everything. I pay all the bills he does not want to know. I sometimes keep old Quinns worth receipts so that I can shake them in front of him to show him where I've spent the money. There is never a penny in the kitty anyway but he always asked where did the money go. But he never wants to pay the bills himself.

Partner C: It's not the same for us. I did pay everything at first but he became too dependent. We discussed it and he started to understand that he must play a role in the family. I think that is important. I stay at home while he is out fishing to save up the money. We go out when he is back and enjoy ourselves. I think the kids are proud of him being a fisherman. They always know what boat he is on. He shifts about a lot.

Partner B: I put up with five years trying to get S back from the pub and from the pier. It was hard and there were terrible scenes but in the end I got the 'going to the pub on the way home' out of the system.

Partner C: Yea, that's something but when you are married you end up accounting for every penny and do you remember doing the Bella crossword. We can't afford even a bloody magazine a week now!

Partner A: There is one other thing I hate about having to run the house alone and pay the bills all the time. Is going down to the office to ask for a sub when he is at sea.

Partner C and Partner B together: Oh yes! We gave that up. I'd never do it again.

Partner A: It's OK for you I have four kids and have still do it. I have to go down and ask for his sub. It is never ready and I have to stand there, every bloody time feeling like a bloody whore or beggar. I stand there in the office '*could I please have (Name of husband)'s money, please*' and after all the messing they finally give you over a cheque. They don't even put it in an envelope. Why can't there be a bloody law to provide fishermen with regular wages like every other working person in the world? I have to budget my bills every week. How can you do that under these circumstances?

Partner C: Yes I did that a few times then I made it clear to my man that I wouldn't be humiliated again. The owners can't see it that way. They believe that they are bankers not employers. But I know it is different for you (Partner A) with four kids but I just won't do that again.

Partner A: Fishermen's wives go unrecognised by sheer abandonment. We are not entitled to nothing. I am penalised being a housewife married to a fisherman. I am not entitled to a medical card, a dental card, no nothing. We are entitled to nothing. It's twenty pounds every time to visit the doctor with the baby. Here is my husband skippering a boat worth nearly a million quid, sometimes out in force eight and he can't even have VHI cover for his family. All because he's 'self-employed'. All I know is that he is in the worse job ever. A first class disaster every time a gale blows!

A selection of written submissions

A number of written submissions were attached to the questionnaires. Here is a selection of the most pertinent.

"I have been married to a fisherman for 34 years. My father was also a fisherman and my brothers as well as my son. One of the biggest issues within my fishing family is that their father is seldom there in their lives when the children are being raised, there is two lives really when a husband is home during bad weather and when he is gone back. Any trouble such as children sick you have to deal with it yourself.

"Another issue is that you have to make wages do for three weeks which is disastrous, you can't make family plans to go anywhere. I've noticed that fishermen's children are always raised by mother and it leaves both children, father and mother bereft in some way. You could say that we are one-parent families with this person who returns from sea, taking your space. I would love to see something done for the younger generation in turns of education, courses to get these women of fishermen up and running something in their own lives. I'd like to thank you for this survey as it is long overdue. I am older and in this game a long time but there is a loneliness for the younger men and women too. The men are not trained for anything else and each time we part we don't know whether we will see each other again. I hope this gives you an insight into the situation.

“I was married to a fisherman. We divorced after 8 years. Being in a relationship with a fisherman I found that bills, finances, childcare management at home was all down to me. Being so far away all week on a boat didn't encourage good communication.

Having only 48 hours off at the end of a trip didn't give enough time to sort problems or familiarise with existing routines. So in effect the 48 hours became a disruption which in the end became intolerable.

I can only speak for myself and I found that after living without him all week and coping with whatever crisis came up on my own made me independent and put me in a position of leadership which I was very reluctant to give up two days a week. So his being away so much did himself a job out of being a husband/father/ partner. We have since moved on and he sees his kid on weekends and gave up fishing but the marriage was not fixable. Life with a partner only truly works when both are present on an ongoing regular basis in my view.”

“My husband in an engineer deckhand. The responsibility of being an engineer means that when he is on a trip off he can be constantly on call. He earns a little extra for that but it can be exhausting for him when he finishes on deck and then has to go back to maintain the engine room.

My husband is gone to sea for a minimum of 16 days sometimes 21 days. This is very stressful for our family especially younger children who suffer greatly from their father being away from home. We are lucky because the boat owner my husband works for is a very generous man and would never let us worry about bills as he is always on hand to give us money. He likes to keep a happy crew and takes an interest in everybody that works for him.

Last year my husband was involved in a very serious accident at sea. This was a very traumatic experience for all the crew and their families. Although there was a lot of media attention I feel that we have become the forgotten victims. To date there has been no update to what happened that evening. There has been no update to the investigation from anybody. The boys did not receive any kind of trauma counselling not their families. Compensation was not available for loss of earnings (the boat was tied up for three months).

This I really think shows the lack of respect for the fishing community. Their men do dangerous work and export a great amount of fish for Ireland. They are very proud, hardworking people but people who don't seem to have a voice in their own country. Farmers have respect for the work they do on land but it seems those who work on the sea do not.”

4.4. Conclusion

Women and their support role as partners of fishermen are more than any cohort the most implicated and affected by change in commercial fishing. The economic and symbolic dominance of the boat still shape categories of perception for both men and women regarding fishing as a way of life. There is a sharp difference of opinion between single and married men engaged in commercial fishing. There is repressed resentment toward single, often younger, men by married or partnered men with children who must compete on equal terms with them. One aspect observed during this study is an increased resentment for single fishers over thirty years who have not found a partner and are still going 'to the pub'. "They have not found their excuse for going out there" said one married man of 35 years.

These single men have unwittingly broken the customary rules of the local fishing game that demands at some stage family responsibility. Children are valued as a way of justifying the worst at sea conditions undertaken by fishermen. However, the traditional social value of family and children is being replaced by purely economic values as intimate relationships collapse and a meaningful way of life is transformed into a means to securing monetary status. These underlying values are important regarding the mode of crew selection and choices made that are not all related to economic factors but are social in aspect. The rearing of fishermen's children, the absence of any specific retirement regime for women who must remain at home while their men are at sea, social difficulties linked to insecure relationships and often local prejudices that persist to consider '*fishermen as the poor relation to everyone else*' all combine to place fishermen's partners, as a social group, in situations of constant uncertainty. Censorship of women's anxieties about fathers and sons in working conditions of poor safety on vessels and increasing time at sea is embodied in one of the phrases recorded: '*Nobody says anything because fishing is local*'. It is this local-centralism of the Irish fishing world that makes it so difficult to revision national categories of control and its social planning.

Those women who accept their domestic situation as it is have fishing backgrounds, are older or as one put it: '*have something of the blood of their men in their veins*'. However, the customary fishing village habitat has been transformed. The tightly bound cottage cluster of Kilmore village has now been dispersed with more than 50% living in the surrounding hinterland generally in isolated bungalows. There is no conscious support for fishermen's wives other than the 'odd night out when the men come home'. For the younger women of the area the Sunday Disco in the local hotel plays an important socialising arena with the young men of the village. The 'outsider sub-culture', so feared by local people, is integral to that socialising force of attraction. A hard life at sea gives way to extremes onshore: the longer away the more the need is there to 'chill out', to use alcohol or cannabis to take down the anxiety and the boredom of sea life. Young fishermen are bound into their factional groups, many of them unable to break away from their crewmen 'mates' while onshore. Onshore for many becomes an alien place, a difficult series of encounters with others they would prefer to avoid. If alcohol consumption or smoking 'sea-shit' is a mode toward resolving that anxiety then it is shared out and has become part of onshore social life⁵⁹. It is a closed social life, often to the point of suffocation as sexual relations and competition between the sexes reshape the group's closed vision of itself. Yet it is also a very vibrant and supportive one during moments of crisis, where friendships are valued and the best can often be remarkably generous. During moments of darkness, when tragedy strikes as it does when men face the awe of the sea there are the invisible supports that few outsiders can appreciate. This is the deeper knowledge of human nature and its relationship with the sea that cannot be

⁵⁹ 'Sea-shit' is the term used for processed cannabis dumped at sea by drugs smugglers and hauled in beamer's nets.

formulised into neat sociological or psychological texts but requires greater cultural and artistic expression⁶⁰.

A number of young persons (with fishing backgrounds) died violently during the last eighteen months in the Kilmore area. Local opinion considered them to be linked to 'drugs' and the sub-culture that surrounds drug taking. There is not the space to give details in this report but it would be negligent to pass over what is an essential part of young fishermen's lives and lack of attachment to a securing identity. There is increasing anomie between a regulated way of life, given its rites of passage through Church service or social ceremony and that of a working life increasingly alienated on deck with constantly changing fellow crewmen and a shore existence given to 'chilling out' exhausted bodies and minds. A locally born pastor, who now works with seamen in the U.S. gave his point of view about change and fishing over the last twenty years of returning for summers to his native Kilmore Quay.

"I am concerned by the spiritual life, the quality of life and the quality of relations between fishermen, their wives and children. Firstly, I would say that there has been a breakdown between nature and the fishermen as being part of their being. I think there has been a cut-off, but I don't know whether it is the Celtic Tiger or the general collapse of belief in religious values such as marriage.

"This new generation of fishermen must find new values but I fear that it might take a whole generation to find them. There has been a weakening of the moral fibre and that has importance for a fishing community like this. Men are at sea for longer and there is a constant searching in their families back home for meaning. The Church was there before to give some direction and to provide the rituals necessary to sustain belief in values. But I see the patterns here as I saw them in fishing villages in the U.S. some twenty years ago. There are now two distinctive groups in this village: those that still go to Chapel and those who are seeking their own rituals of belief. The second group will work out in time their own taboos, but only after anger, confusion and yes violent death. But both groups are looking for the same thing: a framework and security of values for the future. Fishing once gave the means to secure values and to have enough to eat. What I ask is it providing today for this village?"

There was a committee established in Kilmore Quay to try to promote drug awareness among young people: all its members are women. It is precisely the absence of women and their points of view from any solution to the fishermen's 'insurability problem' that condemns to failure technocratic policy to reconvert mentalities toward crewmen's self-regulation. Women and their new roles to influence and manage change in Irish society have to be given a recognised position in changing present sea-bound mentalities. This was understood in the 1997 Fishing Act that is currently reforming fishing in France: two key areas were identified for policy reform. The first was the establishment of clear rules for commercial fishing while the second was to involve fishermen's partners through training to become co-partners with their men in managing their lives together. The need for a reorientation in this direction for Irish fishing is reflected in the last question posed

⁶⁰ There is a need to consider this point seriously. Apart from 'The Perfect Storm' phenomenon there is little effort in Ireland to provide the means to local marine communities to reflect their own working environment. The tendency is to form cultural projects around the past rather than the present and a maritime future filled with its potentials. Technology and its relationship with a marine life style is notably absent in local schools. There is no sailing school for young persons out of Kilmore Quay is another example. This also occurs in rural Ireland where the plethora of heritage projects constantly invoking 'history' as linked to nostalgia. It should be recalled that the term 'nostalgia' comes from the Greek and means 'a sickness unto death' for the past fatherland.

by the sample questionnaire: *'Would you wish to be more involved in your partner's working life?'*: 11 or 60% of respondents answered 'yes', while another 2 persons being 'not sure' what that might mean. From recorded evidence collected from wives over 40 years of age, (and reflected in the 'no' response of the remaining 4 interviewees) there is little doubt that they would never have dreamed of direct involvement in decisions related to their husband's fishing life. This is evidently no longer the case.



Section 5

Kilmore Quay - Responses to Change.

"I'm stuck in limbo. All I want is to fish equal time on with equal time off. I need a regular wage so that I can manage my finances better. I don't know whether I should go to the bigger boats in the West or stay here. I suppose when I think about it all I want is a steady job but fishing is not a steady job. I don't know whether I should come ashore and look for a shore job. What can I do and where do I go? That's the truth I just don't know what I want anymore for my life."

34 year old Kilmore born fisherman holding a Class II skipper's ticket and fishing since he left secondary school at 16 years of age.

5.1. Transposing practices

This monograph study's field research presents a real-world frame of offshore fishing disciplines and working conditions currently effecting fishermen's lives in Kilmore Quay. In order to analyse how structural change is occurring dynamically, an analysis of the constituents is presented under three aspects:

- Practices
- Rules
- Port situation and fishing ecology

5.2. Practices

The share fishing convention is constantly adapted to control better hunting efficacy confronted by more exclusive and competitive catching opportunity. As catching units become more powerful, thus more capital intensive, square-up shares are calculated from a negotiated percentage of an expedition's landing sale rather than the traditional 60-40 split between owner and crew⁶¹. Increasingly distanced boat owners negotiate arrangements with their supervisor skippers who are mandated to negotiate commitment of their crewmen. There is an embedding agency structure to negotiate averages between the upstream and downstream production flows. Financial investment into bigger catching power and tonnage accumulation, is managed through business linkages to global fish buyer conglomerates and financial institutions. The corporate strategy goal is straightforward: to monopolise upstream catching opportunities to assure control of product supply. Its networking distribution is fragmentary, as the Irish fishing field is sub-divided into local harbour identities of familiar conventions rather than lateral organisations of bureaucratic or normalised control.

⁶¹ For example, the primary division might be a 65%-35% split of the net sales of the fish caught between owner and crewmen. The 35% crew figure is then divided out in conventional shares between the crewmen, with some skippers able to command 2 shares of that figure instead of the normal 1.5 shares. Every large catching unit has its specific catch percentage strategy, some of which go into half percentage points. Contingency generates necessity and this in turn determines production discipline and money-making chances. For fishermen who experience such contingency this is seen as 'common sense' but for those trying to give this practice 'process rationalisation' it is far from being a case of applying econometric categories to fit a preconceived model. Using the term 'gross earnings of the working vessel' does not reflect today's expedition percentage and square-up practices.

On deck productivity has increased and slack tightened to justify new business schedule arrangements. Fish pricing structures are regular, thus reducing real income expectations of crewmen. Share fishing remains perceived in the Irish context as the fairest mode to commit native men to the fishing hunt. This implies that the catching unit remains fungible with expedition costs and square-ups. The reality of this practice distorts any coherent percept of annual revenues for Irish crewmen. Not unlike the first decade of Irish agriculture's European transition, the fishing boat remains an intrinsic value of the Irish fisher's household. Rationalising the family farm as a unit of production redefined 'farmer' as 'operator'. Socio-economic policy regarding fishermen's status seeks to rationalise fishing incomes to demarcate the fisherman's household from his working 'home' on the boat. To achieve this, artisan fishing practices require a revised policy framework to track the rationalisation of process risks inserted by recent investment structures. Any effort to design a process control policy must include analysis of these current investment modes that are re-shaping the organisation of fishing practices in smaller port identities like Kilmore Quay. 'Identity' gives a key component of the work, learning and local insight, including peer support for the successful adaptation of fishing disciplines for the zonal management of fish stocks.

One strategy to build-up local economies of scale is to seek a greater span of risk control over landing averages distributed over several boats. This roll-on strategy has been successfully managed by the O'Flaherty Brother's partnership: a unique profile of work, timing and social organisation of eight vessels. What can be learned from this experience is how transposing commercial organisation of embedded conventional disciplines can innovate economies of scale inside a home harbour locality. Transposition is dynamic and triggered by strong entrepreneurial will and production timing⁶². It is a localised shifting of work-time ratios and dispositions into wider scenarios of profit possibility and their social organisation. One of the characteristics of the O'Flaherty Brothers success is the drive to win autonomy for their fishing organisation. They did not seek outside influence to orient production disciplines but improvised within the dispositions of Kilmore Quay's fishing network. They are not dependent today on any external fishing organisation, co-operative structure or on public subventions to give them face. Since 1996, their major downstream linkage has been direct with a niche market in Spain, thus fresh fish quality must be assured on their vessels' decks.

The production discipline adopted was beam trawling that had been introduced to Kilmore Quay by local catching entrepreneurs of the second-generation. There was no discontinuity of conventional practices only a better innovation of production ties into new layering of crew/boat/time organisation. This transposition over a period of ten years to bigger scales of both upstream and downstream production flows was primarily practice driven. While this transposition of better organisation from embedded disciplines has proved successful, it grew independently from wider structures of lateral control. Crew ties remain loosely bound into organisation. In other words, men involve their work on the basis of informal commitment rather than any contractual certainty. The O'Flaherty Brother's fishing partnership is currently positioned between developing its own knowledge of wider spans of commercial fishing control and to being competent to

⁶² I adopt the notion of 'transposition' from work carried out while in Paris under Harrison C. White, Columbia University, USA and the LAMAS Centre for Longitudinal Studies, C.N.R.S. under Alain Degenne, investigating structural change in the French telecommunication industry. Transposition implies decoupling of ties and interpretation of new identity meaning from the resultant discipline adaptation to technology. This is what is happening as "The O'Flahertys" is recognised as an organisation entity throughout the Irish fishing field.

rationalise this knowledge into a process or corporately managed body⁶³. This is a learning transposition from conventional artisan ties to their discipline delegation as a process. Such a business evolution is not linear but embodied across the relational chains of Kilmore Quay's network of men, boats and time. This point is crucial. Any effort to rationalise this localised transposition as being fixed by a time scale will not result in a valid model of what is happening. Control is layered through a number of contingent variables, thus continual information flows. Each variable is calculated from different temporal and biophysical planes: individual boats and technology, individual and collective crew commitment, catching skills and capacities, logistical and knowledge support, landing port access and market fluctuations. Components are bound into a daily working schedule of some 65 persons, whose underlying belief in the continuity of the enterprise is of trust in share fishing as fair practice.

As long as informal commitment between crewmen and supervisory imperatives is contained, then the organisation should continue to catch and sell fish. However, if margins need tightening as competition and fish stock contingency apply pressures, then informal trust will not prove an adequate modality to secure process certainty. It is because of this possibility that the O'Flaherty Brothers' enterprise is of importance, as a case study, to those involved in the future of offshore fishing in the Republic of Ireland. How can wider spans of commercial control be embedded into sibling commitment, (in this case the force of five brothers to sustain crewmen trust in their wills), to provide a continuity platform for greater responsive planning? Attracting inward flows of foreign investment capital to expand enterprise efficacy is one operation. It is another challenge to innovate structures to orient such home learning experiences into greater production flows thus sustaining identities as a key element for localised interdependency.

One of the effects of this transposition dynamic is to generate a new type of arena in the home harbour locale where crew recruitment often occurs⁶³. Transposition also distances at-sea fishing information relations from kinship privilege and its local fishing story circuits. The new arena communicates and shapes the adaptive practices repeated by other fishing discipline groups and individually managed boats. Artisan catching units and their recruitment strategies must propose responses to this new competitive order *inside* their harbour locality. If process rationalisation has not yet provided guidance to the O'Flaherty organisation, it is because the second aspect of the Irish fishing conundrum, rules, have not been modified to deal with the effects of this transposition.

5.3. Rules

Conventional discipline ties and institutional catching rules structure strategies of 'who' and 'how' work as a productive relationship. The transposition from conventional fishing controls to wider spans of social organisation accelerates crewmen decoupling from other

⁶³ Mark Granovetter's work on 'weak' and 'strong' ties and comparison between sociological and economic approaches to labour mobility is invoked here. For a synthesis of how this is currently being applied in social information theory see Brown, John Seely & Duguid, Paul, *The Social Life of Information*, USA, Harvard Business School Books, 2000, pp. 114-115.

⁶³ The harbour is both a physical and social space. It is difficult to envisage *how* 'practices' change when analysed as a coded statistical category. An arena is a competitive public place where everyone sees, then speaks about what is happening to a specific discipline, in this case offshore fishing. This is how attitudes and practices adapt to new technology and its local social organisation. Take an example, it is only ten years ago that electric winches became standard practice on Irish fishing boats. According to one of the first skippers to have them installed: *'You should have heard the rubbish the lads came up with telling me that they would not work, that they would destroy the fish, that they would go on fire. Within two years though they all had them on board because no one would fish with them if they had not got them'*.

catching units. There is no formal fishing employment contract imposing employment relationships and work conditions. Production ties are interdependent on tacit agreement and mutual reciprocity for every trip. However, crewmen now evaluate whether to stay or to go in relation to this new dynamic ordering of work/time at-sea competition. The home harbour labour market provided trade-off margins of commitment for both owners and crewmen. It is flexible, non-regulated and leaves the 'door open' for the deckhand to exit when he decides he may be better rewarded elsewhere. It facilitates owners and owner-skippers continuity of dominance and control distance from the community of crewmen. The share fishing convention worked well to build a localised Irish offshore fishing capacity. Equally, convention inculcated attitudes no longer acceptable for CFP institutional rules' enforcement, in particular concerning training qualification and safety norms.

In the context of the O'Flaherty organisation, the share fishing convention facilitates free solicitation of crewmen from other local catching units to greater money making expectations. While 45% of the O'Flaherty crewmen have origins within a five-mile radius of Kilmore Quay, 76% of the crewmen on individual Kilmore boats are from the same area (see Table 2.4). However, kinship ties with offshore fishing work only constitute 45% of these individual boat crews or 28% of the overall crews fishing out of the Quay (see Table 2.6). Recruitment searches are expanding well beyond Kilmore's familiar fishing ties thus weakening peer exclusiveness over the fishing hunt and its spoils. As the margins of hunting freedom, thus moneymaking opportunity, are restricted by at-sea policing enforcement, chance evaluation is guided by these new practices of recruitment. Crew mobility, (or what is termed 'defection' by some peers), from deck to deck increases as income uncertainty decouples men from what they once evaluated as a 'good boat'.

There is a cohort of crewmen, known locally as 'drop-hands', who circulate from expedition to expedition, able to negotiate commitment during good weather fishing. The local drop-hands' cohort around Kilmore is estimated at 30 men or 10% of the offshore fishing workforce. Increasingly, local owners compete against themselves to attract the more experienced and trusted crewmen to work on their vessels. During moments of good weather tensions, close relation competition produces '*a bad taste in everyone's mouth*' except for the drop-hands, who exploit insider contingency and conflicts between protagonists. '*Getting men to go to sea*' frames the competitive on-shore struggles between local boat owners as widening the crewmen's labour pool is sought. The presence of 'outsiders' on offshore decks, some of whom have been recruited from the current 'refugee' population, create tensions for local experienced crewmen who must evaluate their commitment in a rapidly opening, non-regulated labour market.

These practices of close combat recruitment for the next expedition repress, by necessity, problems related to the fiscal and social situations of the individual crewman. The opposing forces of an open labour market and closed local commitment (or 'familiar loyalty') are such that what remains out of sight is also out of mind. When the boats disappear over the horizon, all socio-economic factors '*are put on the long finger*'. The working space of Irish offshore fishermen is not systemised and efforts to give it some exclusive ordering with the Optional Social Insurance Scheme (that came into vigour in January 1995) have failed. What emerged from this study's interviews with men from Kilmore was their frustration related to the 'legitimacy' of this new competitive force inside their harbour walls. Legitimacy implies agreed rules, whether juridical and/or practical, which provide social action with its recognised limits and possibilities. The consensus recorded to seek 'new rules and conditions' of competitive commitment to the fishing hunt signal that something is not right with the way the actual game is being

played. The players confront increasing pressures to adopt fouling tactics or cheating actions they don't wish to use against each other. This would describe opinions recorded during this study of Kilmore men's tensions about transposing new competitive practices from conventional rules of local recruitment without legal directives recognising crewmen's legitimate status. This forces offshore fishing practices, as one spokesman put it, *'back into the black economy, or at least as regards the quality of the person fishing'*. The reality is that crewmen on Irish boats with no ties to fishing family patrimonies have no regulated status except their bodies to work the deck. This non-regulated free-for-all crew market was described by another experienced skipper already cited for this study as *'a return to slavery'*.

Offshore fishing remains a hunting group expedition. It is the hunt that shapes mentalities and competitive rules regarding its insider fairness. Nothing grabs a headline in fishing news more than the universal term 'cheating'. As underlined in the introduction of this study, understanding the offshore fisherman's gaming world demands constant reference to this fact. From being a free hunter many older Irish fishermen are now confronted by a perception of 'illegitimacy' regarding their professional lives. They are, as one man put it *'constantly forced by authority to break all the rules in order to survive'*. This may be true during the hunt but there are also hidden conventional rules that structure fishing's work organisation inside the home harbour locality. The peer groups who selected who would fish with whom are embodied in a common story that censures how power relations constantly shape realities inside fishing networks such as Kilmore Quay. On a number of privileged moments during the collection of opinion for this study the recognition of a *new* local structure of fishing hierarchy surfaced. Difference could be observed in the way men manipulated ideas about discipline change regarding embedding organisation rules triggered by the O'Flaherty Brothers' fishing enterprise.

The most repeated phrase attempting to frame Kilmore Quay's collective fishing future was the expression of differentiation between local fishermen's identity as *'those who fished as a way of life'* and *'those who fished as a way to get money'*. It is no surprise to find that this difference was articulated by the older second-generation and accompanied by fatalism about Kilmore Quay's offshore fishing autonomy. A number of them also expressed the opinion that such a conversion of young mentalities toward *'only money'* suggested that *'something needed to have been done to provide younger fishermen with a better life'*. This division between a 'way of life' and 'a means to earn a living' signals the end of the fishing family peer equivalency and the reality of intergenerational struggles seeking a new work regime for ties to a broader fishing identity, as yet undefined⁶³.

Those older men who know that their catching days are over and who cannot transfer their knowledge or boats to family inheritors were the most insistent in repeating that *'fishing is finished'*. What they are effectively saying but cannot utter the words due to the censorship of the new local power reality is: *Fishing has finished with me*. Some men hold on to their boats and tonnage, being their only source of retirement capital due to fiscal rules, in the hope that *'in time things will come around again'*. What they perceive

⁶³ Family-run production units constitute their own local hierarchy of peers. They must secure control over the recruitment and organisation of their production units, in this case fishing boats. Everyone must play the game of 'being equal' with some, over time, becoming 'more equal' than the others. This is always a very difficult situation when it comes to structural change of the kinship disciplines provoked by external market reorganisation. Without a new agency level of supervisors such hierarchical equivalency leads to increasing immobility as peers try to avoid at all costs open conflict. The O'Flaherty's have embedded a new layer of 'skipper supervisors', while in the Kilmore Co-operative struggles to sustain peer relations' equivalency has led to its decline in real power chances.

is the end of their peer dominance and thus unconsciously the patrimonial end of Kilmore Quay's fishing family hierarchy. Everything that they received and learned from their fathers or uncles seems to confront an empty future and it is this perception of 'emptiness' that is expressed in the phrase: *'fishing is finished'*.

It is not the future that attracts these men with enthusiasm but the memory of a past status. Instead of engaging to build a project for collective fishing futures they resign themselves to stories of past achievements and distance themselves from 'the future', an intrinsic element of belief in present day planning. Thus, peer support, so vital for all successful transpositions of family-based production to new structures of wider commercial control, is tacitly withheld. Those men who indicated that they would *'like to get into something like aquaculture'*, *'do something different like organise a local fishing company'* or *'get the Co-op into shape for the younger men'* remain immobilised because of their considered equivalency status amongst the other family groups. None of these second-generation entrepreneurs wants to 'rock the boat' of conventional rules to move unilaterally and re-invest money and time into a collective fishing project. So they must sit on their accumulated fishing spoils, waiting as one man put it *'for something to happen, like it did before, preferably a hurricane!'*.

For this second-generation of the Quay's catching entrepreneurs there is a residual feeling of painful frustration, in some cases dangerous despair. Men who have had enough of the competitive fishing game sometimes *'just walk away and never look back'*. Demoralisation is increased by a perception of 'illegitimacy' as they confront retirement from fishing with no recognised public pension scheme. *'Who is coming behind us to pay us when we retire? Nobody. That's the long and the short of it'*, said one second generation skipper from one of the founding Kilmore fishing families. Yet behind this fatalist phrase there is an unspoken reality: three of this man's sons *are* fishing but are working on boats without any ties to the fishing family core of the village. This outlines the historic frame of offshore fishing from Kilmore Quay over three generations: the transposition of subsistence fishing through its conventional control toward normalising its practices as commercial process. This peer frustration confronting an end of the local order of equivalent relations is transferred to the younger men and this is given highlight in the high percentage (60%) who declared *'that they would not want to see their son become a fisherman'*. Such subjective opinion must be considered with caution because it may not objectify reality, only the powerful emotion of this censored resentment when all family orientated production localities must, sooner or later, confront the force of global market competition.

For the younger generation of fishermen who have broken their strong filial ties with peer discipline and *'gone with the O'Flahertys'* there is much less ambiguity in what they had to say. From interviews recorded and the data collected from the questionnaire these men consider themselves clearly as 'employees'. *'I work for wages and don't want nobody to consider it otherwise. I don't bend the knee to anyone. All I want at the end of the day is the envelope'*. Information gathered from older men about how fishermen were treated by patrons in the past, indicate that there was a strong dependency on the arbitrary will of the skipper-owner toward his crewmen. Not unlike the strong farmer toward his labourers, men had to wait until the patron decided that the time was right to pay his men, and not a moment before this. Such memories are recent and are not forgotten easily. The double-game of the share fishing regime offering the option of a 'self-employed' status while the reality of the majority of Irish crewmen and their families is as a high risk insurance category, assures continuity of this dependency because of the ubiquitous 'tax question'. Put simply: interdependent complicity between all actors in the fishing game assures that

practical convention over rides the rationalisation of working conditions; thus inevitably it is fiscal ties with the distant State that muddy all waters⁶⁴.

The 'tax question' haunts the current fishing field in the Republic of Ireland as it did the agricultural field in the eighties. Behind the public rhetoric to find a solution is the reality that 'the tax question' imposes on crewmen an additional mode of submission to the power of boat ownership. The correlation between crewmen's desire to see a new regime for fishing work and problems related to their own fiscal vulnerability speaks for itself (see Fishermen's Questionnaire under 'Finance and Security'). To regulate the 'tax question' and impose conformity with a charter of share fishing rights and responsibilities would destabilise practices of the present open labour market for crew recruitment. In reality, Irish crewmen's tax situations are venial but allowing their work status to remain uncertain increases dependency on owners and supervisor skippers. This tightens negotiating margins around the share convention as a *modus vivendi* for control over the increasingly competitive fishing hunt. Clearly to regulate this regime would alter the power relationships between owners, supervisor skippers and their crews. It is in the interests of bigger boat ownership and new financial schedules to transform share fishing to a salaried agreement where production averages could be distributed on a regular time basis. This situation can be speeded up if there is constant uncertainty diffused to crewmen that deck positions are threatened by outsiders or as, is the case, today 'refugees'. As younger fishermen realise that they will not have the financial support to gain a foothold on the boat ownership ladder, their vision of working careers is restrained to the harsh reality of a life on the decks of other men's boats. As this fact is internalised, younger men with skipper's tickets and experience perceive their future paths as unprotected by any statutory regulation of their working careers and thus feel the force of exit with every trip that passes.

The single market logic of the Common Fisheries Policy that enforces the free access to fish principle orchestrates the at-sea competitive ocean 'race to fish' and the practice rules of Irish flag catching units. The winners of this native offshore hunting game must transpose their investment capitals, economic, social and symbolic, on to bigger more powerful hunting machines to stay in the race. For the Irish community of boat owners and owner-skippers their regulatory demand therefore is to fix 'more fish' quota possibility through promoting strategic 'stock conservation' to reduce their Euro-partners catching competition. They employ professional technicians and lobbyists to manage loose port organisations and negotiate dominant interests as regional trade-offs at national and European levels. On the other side of the practical fishing coin, the majority of the community of Irish crewmen remains without any regulatory fixing of their work status or retirement schemes to safeguard families after hunting days or accidents. This '*no-action but plenty of talk*' tactic by institutions and regional organisations about Irish crewmen's professional status sanctions the belief of the more sceptical '*that the long term strategy of the Irish State is to phase out offshore fishing altogether*'. It is not the scope of this study to judge this recorded opinion but to attempt to highlight *how* this unbalanced and tension producing work situation became a reality, particularly when the principle actors are sincerely seeking solutions to the conundrum. As this study highlights the problem is less a logic of 'owners' greed' than to structural deficits or gaps as

⁶⁴ Authority control over natural resources, on land or at sea, remains problematic for all States, but has particular historical significance in the Irish context. It is wishful thinking to presuppose that there is an inculcated trust between regulatory authority and fishermen. Political affiliations inside fisher communities are strongly directed by opposition to the status quo and outsider 'interference' in their hunter lives. Any policy that announces isolationism or protectionist demagoguery is attractive for fisher communities for practical rather than ideological reasons.

conventional relations are transposed into new dimensions of *regionalised* competitive advantages inside home harbour poles. Attempting to resolve this localised response to regional market forces cannot be negotiated using the existing national reference frame but requires a radical departure from existing modes of inserting State institutional control.

The argument logic for the transposition phenomenon is as follows: the hunting disciplines that produced a strong fishing identity for Kilmore Quay followed distinctive patterns that can be traced from the end of the Second World War (Section 1). Engendering efforts to organise work on motorised fishing vessels was the commitment enforced by close ties to family peers and the types of investment accumulation into vessel and technology differentiation. Such a localised force committing men to the fishing hunt could reproduce production flows provided there was fish to be hunted *and* greater scales of work organisation transposed as a new generation entered an increasingly competitive hunt. While much has been written and debated about the former, little applied research has been done about the latter in the Irish context. Successful transposition of convention into regional market structures of local production flows is practice driven. Transposition, particularly in the Irish context, is not oriented by a public policy model but is speculatively conditioned by (a) embedded discipline dispositions and (b) the biophysical or ecological configuration of upstream production flows. Each catching unit evolves as a set of variables: capital re-investment into greater tonnage, bigger boat power and better technology, new crewing organisation and differing catching opportunities. These variable must also include a temporal mapping where timing is essential to re-organise greater production flows. Getting a national temporal plane for offshore fishing transposition is very difficult because of the individual decision variables that

are multiplex regarding business penetration of fishing patrimonies and unknown random worlds of ocean fish stock control⁶⁵.

The objective of this study is not to offer a theoretical model but to present the specific conditions of Kilmore's real-world offshore fishing work. The following index plane is therefore proposed to innovate a suitable method for comparing the transpositions of conventional fishing practices in other Irish home harbour localities. Only by comparing and testing the validity of this analysis proposition can empirical knowledge be constituted to build a coherent policy framework for coastal zonal management of localised fishing futures.

⁶⁵ Read 'We don't know what will happen to stocks' Fishing News, January, 20001. Dr.J.J. Maguire a former senior scientist in ICES which advises the European Commission on TACS: *'The problem is that we really don't know what's going to happen in the marine environment; we don't know if global warming will effect recruitment, whether water temperature changes will occur which could affect recruitment, the effects of recruitment of other species on the cod stocks and so on. It's really like trying to predict the weather...The truth is that we don't know what is going to happen'*.

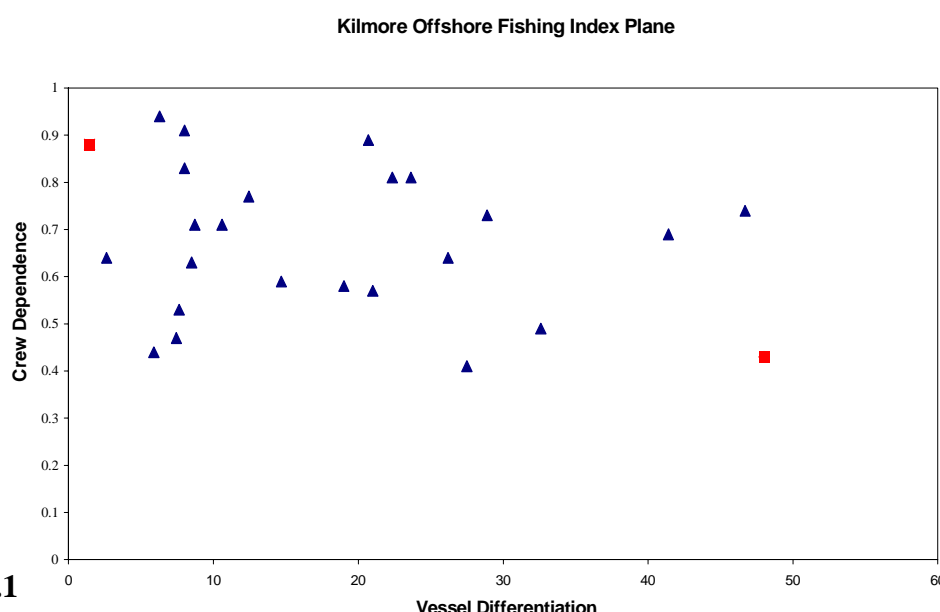


Fig. 5.1

The above local offshore fishing index plane, fig.5.1, is mapped by calculating co-ordinate positions of the two variables of 'crew dependency' and 'vessel difference' for each of Kilmore's offshore catching units. It presents the relative positions of the units regarding the transposition dynamic of the Kilmore fleet⁶⁶. The vertical axis is calculated by degrees of vessel and work conditions difference, i.e. kW power, age and licence segment. The horizontal axis is calculated by degrees on a base of 0 to 1 using local identity variables and catching unit dependencies, i.e. average age, social origin, social status, training qualifications, owner ties to the boat. The variables have been weighted to give practical balance using qualitative information gathered for this study. The plane's 45° axis shows 5 boats that have Dependency/Difference ratios with a high autonomy value distanced from the Kilmore Quay dependent identity. These boats are: 'The Newgrange', 'The Saltees Gannett', 'The Mary J' all of which are owned by the O'Flaherty Brothers, 'The Bridget Carmel' owned by local man Johnny Keating. 'The St. Josse', a French built twin-rigger managed in partnership by the O'Flaherty's and Brian White and the youngest vessel of the local fleet has the highest autonomy position. The boat with the highest autonomy co-ordinates the St. Josse's is distinctively marked with by a red square, as is 'The Vrigheid's', the vessel with the highest dependency value in the fleet and thus closest to the (O, I) co-ordinate, or the top left corner of index plane. The Vrigheid is the oldest boat, 51 years, of the local fleet. The mapping configuration of the scallop boat cluster inside Grid A is interesting: a semi-circle around a mean dependency-differential co-ordinate of (0.63, 5.3) while the more autonomous, thus scattered long-trip offshore boats have a mean dependency-differential ration of (0.58, 42).

The five grid zones present a cluster profile for the following named vessels.

⁶⁶ Details of variables, the full list of co-ordinates and weighting is given in Annex 1.

N.B. that this index plane is not calculated on vessel catching and financial performances but is an effort to represent relative catching and crew power ratios inside the home harbour locale.

Grid A	Grid B	Grid C	Grid D	Grid E
Vrigheid	Kathleen K	Dinah B	Saltees Gannett*	Bridget Carmel
Elly Gerda	Surcouf	Angela B		Mary J*
Nichola Sharon	Hornriff	Martina Elisha		St Josse*
Karen Ann	Deirdre Mairead*	Quay Fisher*		
Prina Cordelia		Saturnis*		
Paramount		William Joseph		
Hendrijke*		Newgrange*		
Leon				
Atlantis				
Le Cheile				

- Denotes vessel under the O'Flaherty Brother's ownership and control. The temporal and material path of the O'Flaherty's transposition force is from the MFV Hendrijke to the MFV St. Josse. This is an important element of validation for this index as a partial reality plane because there was no financial investment or time at sea variables included in its elaboration, only social ties with boat difference values.

Grid A is characterised, unsurprisingly, by local family boats with specific bi-valve scalloping licences and composing the majority of the local South East Scallop Fishermen's Association. Beam trawlers, with the exception of the Surcouf and the Kathleen K, make up the other cluster groups. Both the Kathleen K and the Surcouf are family run and skippered by young men from that family, thus signal a high dependency with the Quay as a home port identity. The more the catching unit is positioned toward the bottom right of the index plane, grids 4 and 5, the more autonomous and distanced is the catching unit from the conventional rules of the local harbour locality. Part of the reason why Johnny Keating's catching unit⁶⁷ MFV Bridget Carmel is positioned there is the beam trawler's 1,119 kW power base that gives this catching unit its greater marine differential, thus production boundary distinction from the scalloping fleet. The logic behind every successful catching unit of the second generation has been to

⁶⁷ Recall the definition of a catching unit: 'A catching unit is the inventory of elements, including social capital, which constitute a single hunting expedition. A catching unit includes not just the boat and its crew but the historical disposition that gives that unit its identity as a named patrimony'. In fact, this is Johnny Keating's third Bridget Carmel each enchainning ties from the previous accumulations. However, applied sociology research and economic modelling try to summarise real-time situations and practices into ideal pair type relations to produce mapping for tendencies. Historic dispositions need to be analysed and understood within this practice-based context. It is this misunderstanding of sociology's ambivalence, as an informal scientific discipline, that results in abandonment when its work is questioned by business interests. Business strategy choices are dominated by rational management practice and therefore must attempt aggregation by delimiting production categories.

accumulate the highest degree of autonomy and difference possible given the conditions of the fishing field and the investment schedules organising the entrepreneur's style. CFP fishing field and producer market conditions have now changed and it is these new structures that shift the game's possibilities away from the individual entrepreneur toward the wider span of control offered by a cumulative fishing company. What this index plane offers is a method to compare and validate *localised profiles* of the transposition dynamic by giving it qualitative and quantitative mapping. It needs underlining that attempts to elaborate insight into localised discipline and network realities are messy and often incongruent affairs, unless accompanied by critical feedback. This is why the subjective opinions of those directly implicated (given prominence in Sections 3 and 4) must be included and given reference in order to analyse specific characteristics of each local fishing environment.

5.4. Port situation and marine ecologies

The final aspect of the analysis of transposing offshore fishing disciplines out of Kilmore Quay is the importance of both its social and biophysical components in relation to offshore marine ecologies. The vital relational context of the human social and marine ecology is often prescribed by abstracted categories of econometric modelling for commercial fishing. If this is not the case it is often to the detriment of the human social environment that fish species ecologies are projected as of primary distinction thus of more scientific interest. In its simplest form a collective fisher identity is the product of two components: the social action of hunting and ...the fish. Erudite opinion that follows on this relational context of two biological forces is without real impact. How both natural elements reproduce or 'recruit' in relation to the regular hunting expedition is the subject of a vast human history from the Inuit Hunter-Gatherers of the Great North to the *pirogue* off the African coast. Regulatory balance between fishermen's drive to pillage during the fish kill and the rationality of scientific evidence demanding hunting controls because a marine species ecology can not be sustained is the object of constant conflict between protagonists. One Kilmore fishing pioneer of the first generation placed the problem of modern technology driven fishing and its species ecologies in a context understood by all working on fishing vessels. It is a common sense interpretation of the economic scales of change produced by the technology driven fishing hunt:

"You want me to tell you what has changed since I began fishing back in the days of Willie Bates. Well it is simple. Today, there are big boats and there are small boats. The big boats are owned by the big men and the small boats are owned by the small men. When the big boats go to sea, they need at least 150 to 200 boxes of fish to pay only for the fuel already burned before they can earn a single bob. Now two hundred boxes is an awful lot of fish before you even start to say that you can earn money. But that is the way things have gone in my own life-time. You have to steam a hundred miles before shooting the nets and all that steaming costs money and money in fishing is fish. So the way I see things is this and it is an old fisherman talking now: it is the fish that have to pay for the fish. The big guys who own the big boats can't see this because an awful lot of them today have never even fished themselves. For them they are involved in getting as much out of the sea as they can before there is nothing left for anyone. That is the way things have gone since I went down to the harbour at fourteen years of age and when two hundred

boxes of fish was regarded as enough to feed your family for a couple of months. Now it can't even pay for the fuel for some of the big boats for a couple of days and that in my opinion is the real scandal that lies behind fishing today. It is a scandal that everyone knows about but no one has the courage to say: stop that's enough greed and let the fish come back to our shore".

The above extract unconsciously hides as much as it reveals. While the argument is without flaw and its stark effects without blemish, it also reflects the powerlessness of the local fisher to bring a conscious control attitude into his hunting practices. The man speaking was a successful, highly competitive fisherman during his own career. He knows, as well as the next successful catching entrepreneur that the practical rules of the fishing hunt are to take as much from the designated box-area as is humanly and technically possible. The arrival of 'bigger boats owned by bigger men' has changed the local frame of that competitive hunting mentality, thus its inculcated order of communal values and individual prestige. As there has been very little public investment into modes of educating and converting this individual hunter mentality then what is said about fish stock control management must be interpreted against these practical realities. Much discussion has been given recently in the Republic of Ireland to reforming fishing training and introducing a ranking order on decks of fishing vessels. Much of the political and technical rhetoric must presuppose that there will be a lucrative fishing space and local fishing identities to sustain such fishing futures. Little research and serious debate has been given to the practical problems related to how to convert this native hunter mentality into that of the collective aquacultural harvester.

What remains deeply inculcated into the Irish skipper and his crews is the hunting impulse that cannot perceive beyond the hunt for fortune. This non-perception is not because of 'stupidity, 'greed' or fisher 'avarice' but because quite simply this was and still is his learned way of life. To learn to fish successfully is a hands-on apprenticeship that implies peer dominance, thus peer respect. To change mentalities, thus the modalities of this hands-on apprenticeship, it is not the young men entering the game who should be the primary target for education and training goods but the local fishing peers. As pointed out, many of the respected fishing peers now attaining 50 years of age, are withdrawing from being actively involved in the local fishing game. Public training policy, on the other hand, presupposes that practices and inculcated attitudes may be converted by concentrating education on the next generation. This is not a practical solution to immediate problems but one that postpones confronting the realities of an inculcated and structured uncertainty about fishing futures, thus producing high risk taking and regular mishaps at sea⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ The length of time it has taken to pass legislation regarding the mandatory wearing of life jackets at sea for Irish deckhands refracts the reality of authoritative power of the national executive over fishing practices. Minister Fahey signalled this in his important speech to the Dail when he recognised that compliance could only be achieved '*through statutory regulation and enforcement to promote safety awareness and the highest-quality marine emergency services*'. The Irish Times, Dail Report, February 9, 2001.

As this monograph study of Kilmore Quay highlights, there is not symmetry between the recent transposition of offshore fishing production into bigger boats and more rational crew organisation and the containment of a distinctive fishery identity for the surrounding village space. The opposite effect is emerging as the fish-processing sector becomes integrated into global downstream structures. The harbour-village morphology, *per se*, is distanced by a maritime tourist-rural speculative policy, that projects fishing as a show piece with its 'luxury marina' rather than the daily activity of men to sustain their partners and children (see 3.9 'Forces of Change'). Of course, institutional and county development plans' rhetoric insure statutory reference to fishing as a sector logic to be 'sustainably developed' but little, if any, empirical work has been undertaken at this level:

- (a) To understand the dynamic of transposing catching practices in relation with the zonal management of marine ecologies *and* their specific economic linkages with on-shore human society.
- (b) To construct a framework of Kilmore's segment fishing disciplines to contain the port's socio-economic identity within a regional coastal zone market context.

The prophetic view is that some 'body' or institution will guide offshore fishing away from Kilmore toward a bigger and more serviced port future: i.e. Waterford. This would neither be practical or advisable within the context of diffusing control instruments for the coastal zone management of offshore fish stocks. The reason for this is that Kilmore Quay, despite arguments against its continued development as an offshore fishing port, contains the invaluable capital of a 'fishing identity'. It is this embedded identity of discipline knowledge that needs conversion to a new spatial and symbolic fishing enterprise centre for transfer to a younger generation. Rationalising the local cumulative fishing effort and establishing procedure rules for recording and orienting layers of daily organisation that bind in fishermen, boats and practices into a home fishing port identity should be the goal of regional planning for sustaining commercial fishing. To allow decoupling or 'defection' to continue without a clear flagging of where practices need to be guided for the future is to allow embedded disciplines and local network identity to drift beyond the horizon of the possible and disappear. It is what makes, as one skipper-owner of the second generation put it: *'fishing life more absurd everyday...and that will bury us here for good'*.

5.5 Innovating a new framework for fishing identities

These three aspects that condition offshore fishing, as discipline practices of production flows and spin-off network identities, provide some substance for collective organisation modes in the future. Significantly, the new local policy regarding port management does not include statutory instruments to induce procedural discipline for fishermen's representation. It is loosely bound between the *ad hoc* fishermen's committee of only three men and the Harbour Master. There are no guidelines to engage contractual rules and service delivery responsibilities. This is not a fortunate development for Kilmore's fishing history. It continues past conflicts to embed mutual trust between statutory authority and

fishermen as a local production group. While it may offer an immediate solution to Wexford County Council's management take-over of the port of Kilmore Quay, it sets in place an unbalanced and outmoded hard policy of the stick and the carrot (see 3.6 'Port Management Authority').

There is only one existing collective formation to represent and orient fishing identities from this home harbour locality: the Kilmore Quay Fishermen's Co-operative. Evidence collected and given a brief analysis (see 1.4) signals clearly that there is a problem of reproducing the Co-op's legitimacy to represent local fishing interests, thus a new force of attraction to confront power structures inside the harbour locale. Corporate actions can form new identity networks but more often than not they block off action to assure the continuity of status quo. The hypothesis of this study's findings regarding specific problems related to the Kilmore Co-op is that downstream market links have assured continuity of the share fishermen with fish sales, thus isolating, indeed denigrating the Co-op identification with collective fish market control. If the collective strategies of local fishermen are to contract together to invest and land their fish into their Co-op auction then this fixes the regulatory status of the Co-op as a corporate body on the fish markets. To do this successfully a co-op must embed a new layer of value control between ownership market interests and the social organisation of fishing. Effectively they must mandate and pay a supervisory agent, or as one man put it, '*a type of Hitler figure like in Union Hall*', to manage their fish sale interests as a process business. This is increasingly common practice today in other ports, such as Union Hall and Clogherhead, but it does not explain why this has not happened in Kilmore Quay, one of the first modern fishermen's co-ops founded in the Republic of Ireland in 1955.

One of the premises of this monograph study is that the problems experienced by the Kilmore Co-op committee adequately reflect movements of commercial transposition from Irish offshore fishing conventions. To understand the different forces of push and pull across the daily struggles of boat owners to commit crewmen and to mobilise collective interests is to understand the universal evolution of fish selling and buying interfaces confronted by technical determinism⁶⁹. Action to commit or recruit local crewmen is no longer the same as action to mobilise collective interests to secure better market control of fish prices. The origins of the Kilmore Co-op, as a service entity for dominant fishermen's interests, did not embed any procedural regularity for containing its group market force *while* managing intergenerational change, so vital for the competitive energy of the local catching game. The historic error was to perceive its primary strategy within a fish buyer market and not within an upstream production framework. It must be emphasised that this perception was contingent on, and shaped by the share fishing convention and fish processing's implantation into the locality. The share convention demands that square-up shares are perceived at top market prices or skippers could lose their crews to better square-up deals. Once the fish buyer's agency entered directly into the wheelhouse (through the use of the fax and satellite telephone) or personal proximity to the

⁶⁹ 'Technical determinism' includes new financial and market information schedules, such as Internet auctions, and not just improved catching technology.

processing entrepreneurs, the Co-op's exclusive market linkage was discontinued and individual members, unable to negotiate equivalent prices for their fish, left its domain. As pointed out at the beginning of this study *distance* from the other, be it individual, group or corporate, is the functional strategy for all players in the highly contingent fish game. Distance gives the player time and freedom of movement to re-negotiate during specific contingency.

The common meaning of this commercial evolution is understood by the fishermen of Kilmore Quay, including those actively involved in the Co-op's day to day running. However, there is a deeper structural fault line that must be addressed in order to contain the Co-op's significant symbol of the Quay's historic fishing identity. It is a problem that is found elsewhere in voluntary co-operative groups that failed to adapt and reproduce their socialising force of attraction over a new generation of producers. It is a problem of transposing strong peer relations to weaker but more normalised ties structured as a professional association. This is more often than not misunderstood as an ideological problem; but it is soundly practical. What happens or more importantly does not happen in one locality compared with another is the true grit of history. Policies that induced choices of social action, such as promoting a fishermen's co-operative adopting the rules of an agricultural co-operative, shape local historical horizons. The opposition voiced by B.I.M. to the Co-op's entry into the processing side of the fish industry at the end of the 1970s is affirmed today as having been valid. However, of more significance is the absence of an alternative policy regarding how to guide a fishing Co-op away from the processing sector temptation toward better a social organisation of its catching population. This is of vital importance when observing recruitment conflicts and peer disengagement produced by this absence of an institutional policy for presupposed strong fishing identities where, in fact, increasing individualism and accumulated monopoly force reigns.

The practical problem is to orient individual peer *wills* toward the development of a renewed mission for the Kilmore Co-op with a new set of relations between fishermen themselves to manage localised change in a modern technology driven fishing community. The problem of achieving such a relational conversion of mentalities was underlined by one of the Co-ops principal actors in the following extract:

"It is not what you want to do with the co-op but what you want to do with the fishermen. The co-op will follow on if we had the fish then we can get into the markets. But today you cannot get markets unless you have the volumes of fish....A fisherman is there to get what he can. That is his attitude. He's a hunter and that is the basis of why he's at it. And every man will stay at it in order to get as much out of it as he can within the shortest possible time. He is not basically worried about the community or at least the younger ones are not. They won't agree to anything like. So look at the other ports around the country and see how many fishermen's organisations there are. That is the problem of the Irish fishing industry. It always comes back to the problem of not uniting. I remember the lads going to meetings but it did not last. If you can't organise the people well then that is the problem. In my view they, the fishermen don't want to be organised seemingly. That is my impression of them having been both a fisherman and a fish buyer in my time'.

This is an experienced subjective view from inside the Co-operative and needs to be objectified in opposition to the transposition reality embedding a new layer of supervisory control outside in the harbour. 'Being united' does not have practical meaning, except when there are moments of national manipulation to provoke 'a crisis' scenario to trigger change across the industry. This was the case during the recent 'fuel crisis' protest that saw Kilmore fishermen at sea during the orchestrated protests in other ports around the country⁷⁰. 'Being united' is an institutionalised illusion regarding the social realities of Irish fishermen's working and social lives. What unites fishermen is the temporary convention of the fishing hunt and a shared insight of the power relations that keep boats at sea and the money coming ashore. Bad weather, technical, social and natural contingency, constantly shape their uncertain and insecure worlds. Efforts to 'bring them together' are not exclusively condemned to failure. Practical sense requires that presupposed bonds of collective unity among fishermen are short lived, not because they don't recognise themselves as the same breed of men, but because the conventional fishing game still inculcates that the only way to survive *'is to get out on your own'* or *'keep distance!'* This impulse toward the continuing delusion of self-autonomy, *'getting into the wheelhouse'*, still motivates the majority of good fishermen and not any embedded sense of collective identity or shared responsibility. If public policy-makers desire to reform working conditions on Irish fishing vessels and accord crewmen's lives a recognised social status it must begin from this real-world premise. They should accept that there is only unity of immediate, functional interests and thus no learned perception of a collective, substantive corpus to negotiate localised structural change coherently⁷¹.

If this premise offers a more practical departure, consideration should be given to what is signalling change in conventional practices in Kilmore: the embedding of a new layer of supervisory control inside wheelhouses. This practical solution to the problem of breaking with strong kinship ties to expand spans of control to increase fishing opportunity investment needs to be replicated by fishery management authorities by reaching down to local home harbour actors. The creation of a supervisory role for the Fishery Advisory Technician or FAT in some ports is a positive step toward achieving this new local layering of

⁷⁰ The most significant effect of that 'crisis' manipulation was the success of B.I.M.'s 'training seminars' that resulted in the South-East gathering 350 men together in a Waterford hotel to receive a training payment in December, 2000. Men registered for the seminar and thus valuable information was collected for a minimum of public relations outlay. What men regretted about the 'day out' was there was *'not enough about what is going for the future'*. One Kilmore deckhand said: *"Why did they not allow us to ask a few questions about the industry. Sure it was a chance in a lifetime to meet us deckies and have a good debate about our future. I think they're afraid of us really or at least of letting us say what they might not want us to say in public."* It is to be hoped that B.I.M. consider establishing this on an annual end of year basis to build trust in the democratic process.

⁷¹ This underlines the learned contradictions between individual competitive and group co-operative communication symmetries of hunting ties. See footnote 10. This is one of the reasons why fishermen require *'kid gloves' handling* as one prominent fishermen's leader put it. There is a latent violence never far from the surface when any criticism of fishing practices is brought into the public arena. Why? Understanding the *'psychology of fishing'*, as one man asked for is required if any research progress is to be made into developing new communication circuits and learning modes for the future.

supervisory learning between fishing organisations and a local knowledge community. Regarding Kilmore Quay's particular port situation any institutional action to orient attitudes toward managing coastal zone change should concentrate on the Co-operative to orient wills to build a fishing enterprise centre. A fishing enterprise centre does not begin with building, but a knowledge-based identity. Structural funding provision has been made to allow Financial Instruments for Fishery Guidance, FIGs, to be solicited and invested in such innovative collective projects⁷².

The pilot project would have a simple mission: to bring men and women together and innovative a blueprint to develop a learning community of fishing practices around the Co-operative, as a flagship for the future. It is by opening up the Co-operative as a space for the possible that progress could be negotiated to find solutions for planning this information and technological defined future. However, all local development projects depend on individual wills toward discipline formation out of network ties to a commonly threatened identity. Without such wills and their choices, there cannot be a sustained investment, thus continuity of the project goals of the development plan. This study recorded sufficient subjective evidence from potential younger men to signal that such a pilot project could innovate learning groups. The real problem is to bring the peer generation to understand that without their conscious decision to come together to accept the realities of change and its effect on people involved in fishing there can be no progress. If this does not happen then it is hard to see how the Kilmore Fishermen's co-operative can survive into this new decade. The Co-operative owns the key land around which the processing sector has implanted its factories. Its spatial and symbolic positions are of forceful strategic value toward mediating the idea of a fishing enterprise centre around which such learning can be diffused and managed. Such a strategy would embody a plan to attract the younger generation of fishers and importantly their female partners to invigorate socialisation and new learning toward sustaining Kilmore Quay's commercial fishing identity as essential to any proposed coastal zonal management scheme.

Fishermen's partners and their children are key actors who have remained excluded from the public community of fishing. Their roles as household managers, child rearers, lovers and morale supporters remain under-researched, publicly marginalised and only cited by the public media when tragedy strikes their households. Any practical solution toward inducing Irish fishermen to manage their lives in a more self-regulated mode must, by practical expediency, include their voice and active participation. They need to be brought into the fishing game if structural change is to be given real-world *meaning* about how and why men go to sea to hunt fish. Women are key players in the fish-processing sector where their manual skills and accountancy tact allowed local processing to flourish out of Kilmore Quay. They are also essential but invisible actors in the catching hunt; but in this case their vital services go unpaid and more importantly unrecognised by a male dominated hierarchy. This situation is no longer

⁷² See Article 17, *Innovative measures and technical assistance*, E.U. Council Regulation No 2792/1999. This is the key European Union directive for structural support to the fishery industry. It is a pity that a copy of its contents was not sent to every skipper and crewman in the country.

acceptable as the results of this study's women's questionnaire in Section 4 indicate. Any policy to regulate commercial fishing as a 'way of life' must include the point of view of women and a possible role for their inclusion as co-managers of their partners boats and fishing lives. If this practical role for women were not to be recognised by explicit action by public policy and fishermen's organisations then the effects of their continuing exclusion from local fishing futures will push both their men and their sons out of fishing. This will leave many wondering why native offshore fishermen and fishermen's families ceased to be a way of life and disappeared in the Republic of Ireland at the beginning of the 21st century.

Annex 1

Argument

The argument for building an index plane for local fishing disciplines and their dependence/difference ratios is to find a suitable tool to evaluate and compare transposition between different local fishing ports. The prototype proposed is very basic but effective for this study. It uses sociological qualitative and material quantitative data assembled during field-work. A third axis composed of temporal and spatial distances traced through the marine environment is absent due to insufficient data. The resultant information mapped is therefore dialogic: social dependency-material difference. The hypothesis is that such a co-ordinated plane could be analogous with other ports thus giving a social topography to evaluate and compare evolution and probe constants.

The Crew Dependency Ratio (CDR) for each catching unit was evaluated and weighted using the following variables:

Average Age of Crewmen: Weight: 0.5.

Social origins of Crewmen: Weight 1.0. Calculated as an average using the following variables: I=Kilmore Fishing Family; 0.75 = Kilmore village radius no kinship; 0.5= Outside Kilmore radius but Irish; 0.25 = Outside Ireland.

Social Status: Weight 1.0. Married or partner: 1.0. Single O. Therefore one man married out of a crew of five gives a dependency ties of 0.2 for this unit. Single men are regarded thus as having a much lower dependency link to stay with the catching unit than married or partnered men.

Training: Weight 0.5. Those crewmen *without* any training are given a dependency value as men with training are more mobile in the crewmen labour market.

Ownership relationship: Weight 1.0. Catching units with a skipper owner 1.0; Local family owned with younger family skipper: 0.8; Supervisor skipper locally born: 0.5; supervisor skipper with no familiar ties to Kilmore: 0.3.

The Vessel Difference Ratio (VDR) was evaluated using the three variables of kW power (P), vessel age (A) and type of fishing segment or licence (S). The Segment (S) was weighted as follows: Polyvalent: 1.0; Beam Trawler: 0.8; Pelagic: 0.7; Specific: 0.5 The operating logic to obtain the VDR was: P/A.S.

The Index plane was then mapped using each vessel's CDR AND VDR values as co-ordinates for an x-axis of difference spread over 0-40 and a y-axis of dependency spread from 0-1.0.

The following are the CDR and VDR values of the Kilmore offshore fishing fleet as calculated from data collected for this study in August 2000. N.B. the closer the value of the CDR is to 1.0 the higher the crew dependency on local family ties and staying with the boat. The higher the VDR value is the greater the catching opportunity and boundary mobility of the catching unit at sea.

Vessel Name	CDR	VDR
Vrigheid	0.88	1.46
Elly Gerda	0.64	2.63
Nichola Sharon	0.91	8.0
Prina Cordelia	0.83	8.0
Paramount	0.71	10.6
Hendrijke	0.63	8.5
Leon	0.53	7.64
Atlantis	0.47	7.45
Le Céile	0.44	5.9
Kathleen K	0.77	12.44
Surcouf	0.71	10.6
Hornriff	0.59	14.7
Deirdere Mairéad	0.58	19.0
Dinah B	0.81	22.35
Angela B	0.89	20.7
Martina Elisha	0.81	23.64
Quay Fisher	0.73	28.9
Saturnis	0.64	26.2
William Joseph	0.57	21.0
Newgrange	0.41	27.4
Saltees Gannet	0.49	32.6
Bridget Carmel	0.69	41.4
Mary J	0.74	46.7
St Josse	0.43	48.0